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THE RIGHT REV. ROSCOW SHEDDEN, D.D.

Frontispiece.

UPS AND DOWNS IN A WEST INDIAN DIOCESE

BY

ROSCOW SHEDDEN

Bishop of Nassau



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PREFACE

IT is no inclination of my own which has led me into the indiscretion of writing a book. I have never been under any illusion as to my capacity for such a task. But the Nassau Council in England decreed that a book must be written to stimulate interest in our Mission, and everything seemed to point to the necessity of its being done by me. A great deal of material for the work had been amassed by Archdeacon Wakefield, and he left all his notebooks to me at his death. These I was able to supplement from other sources of information to my hand in the library at Addington House.

My thanks are due to Miss Dorothy Pitman, assistant mistress of S. Hilda's High School, Nassau, and to my sister, Miss Evelyn Shedden, for typing the whole of the MS.

The title of the book was suggested by Canon Webb, who is less fond of the 'ups and downs' of a life on the ocean wave than I am.

✠ ROSCOW NASSAU :

June 8, 1927.

CONTENTS

CHAP.		PAGE
I. BEGINNINGS	- - - -	I
	Columbus and his landfall—First English settlers—Reign of the Lords Proprietors—The pirates—Buried treasure—Conveyance of the islands back to the Crown—Constitutional Government—Mr. Guy, the first S.P.G. Missionary — Christ Church and its vestry — American War of Independence—Formation of parishes—Turks Islands and the Caicos.	
II. EARLY YEARS OF THE NINETEENTH CENTURY	-	17
	S.P.G. efforts in the out-islands—Bray's Associates and education—Dr. Strachan—The church at Grand Turk—Foundation of the Diocese of Jamaica—First visit of a bishop to the Bahamas—Origin of the Native Baptists—Withdrawal of S.P.G. and coming of Wesleyan Methodism.	
III. SLAVERY AND EMANCIPATION	- -	33
	The slave trade—Difficulties of the British Government registration — Friction between English officials and House of Assembly—The new slave code—Governor Sir James Smyth—Constitutional warfare—The apprenticeship system — Out - island administration — Full emancipation—Attitude of the Church.	

CHAP.	PAGE
IV. NASSAU A BISHOPRIC - - -	48
Archdeacon Trew and his work—Bishop Spencer's visits to the Bahamas—Church development among the coloured people—Education—Friction between Bishop and Archdeacon—Dr. Courtney, Suffragan-Bishop of Kingston—Dr. Caulfield, first Bishop of Nassau—His very brief episcopate.	
V. PROSPERITY AND ADVERSITY - -	58
The colony's industries—Nassau's trade-booms coincident with political situations in America—The American Civil War and blockade-running—Parallel situation produced by Prohibition in regard to liquor-running—Attitude of the British Government—The fat years and the lean—The Disestablishment campaign—Bishop Venables—The Catholic stamp and Protestant opposition—The Church in the out-islands—The Bishop's yacht <i>Message of Peace</i>.	
VI. THE CHURCH SELF-GOVERNING - -	75
The Bishop's first attempt to create a Synod—Building up of endowments—Protestant scruples in regard to the Purchas Judgement and the Bishop's policy—The Bishop's desire for a new Synod recognized by the Legislature—The West Indies a Province—Battle with the Diocesan Council—An Enabling Bill—False steps retraced and the Church free.	
VII. CLOSING YEARS OF THE NINETEENTH CENTURY	94
Bishop Cramer-Roberts—Bishop Edward Churton—The diocese at a low ebb—The new Bishop's plans and aims—Archdeacon	

Contents

vii

CHAP.

PAGE

Wakefield—Dean Swann—Henry Churton—
‘The triumvirate’—The Seamen’s Mission
—Sponging—Negro ‘spirituals’—The spon-
ger’s life and the sponge business—Other
industries of the colony : fruit and sisal-fibre.

VIII. WORK OF THE DIOCESE UNDER ‘THE LORD EDWARD’ - - - - 116

F. B. Matthews—Andros—Working an is-
land parish—Miss Isabel Newton—Archdeacon
Wakefield—William Lowndes—Communion
and Confession—Edward Wallop—Failure of
the Bishop’s health—Visit of Bishop Hornby
to the diocese—His account of Long Island—
The American invasion—The ‘Crisis in the
Church’ and its effects on Nassau—Strained
relations in the Synod—Resignation of the
Bishop.

IX. BISHOP HENRY - - - - 137

Procedure for filling a vacancy in the see—
Open war in the Synod—Nomination of Henry
Churton and Appeal to the Primate—Quash-
ing of the election—Henry Churton elected
again and consecrated—His out-island visita-
tions—Obeah—The new Bishop’s work in
Synod—The Mission at Inagua—The
tragedy of Ragged Island—Estimate of Bishop
Henry’s episcopate by one of his clergy.

X. BISHOP HORNBY - - - - 155

Election of Dr. Wilfrid Bird Hornby—
Taking up of the reins—The Horbury Sisters
—‘The Farm’ and S. Hilda’s School—Scope
of the Sisters’ work—The Bishop and the
Nassau churches—The new marriage law—

Difficult questions—Resolution in Synod—Standards of morality—The war—The Nassau Association in England—Elinor Smith—S. Columba's, Sunderland—Bishop's decision to resign—Nassau's devotion to him—The Rev. G. H. Bown's election and death—Consecration of the present Bishop.

XI. THE PRESENT DAY

169

Financial depression after the war—Effects of Prohibition in enriching the Bahamas—The Government and 'boot-legging'—The tourist traffic—High cost of living—Decline in Sunday observance—A native ministry—The Church and education—Forms of worship as authorized by the Province—Boy Scouts and Girl Guides—Outdoor games—Armistice Day observance—Spiritual growth in the out-islands—Hurricanes—Need of priests for out-island work—Conclusion.

UPS AND DOWNS IN A WEST INDIAN DIOCESE

CHAPTER I *BEGINNINGS*

THE history of the Bahamas begins with the night of Thursday, October 11, 1492. The moon was in its third quarter : it rose about 11 p.m. A little before moonrise Columbus on the poop of his vessel, standing on a westerly course, had thought he saw a light ahead. It seemed like a wax-candle rising and falling. The crew were sceptical, but the admiral was convinced that they were close to land. Ahead of the flag-ship was the caravel *Pinta*, a faster sailer. From the deck of the *Pinta*, some two hours after midnight, a seaman, named Rodrigo de Triana, sighted land, the sandy shores of an island some miles ahead showing up in the moonlight. The three vessels were hove to, waiting for daylight ; and on the Friday morning they arrived at a small island called, in the language of the original inhabitants, Guanahani.

There are rival claimants for the honour of having been the first land in the Western Hemi-

sphere to be discovered by the intrepid explorer. The island where Columbus made his landfall was named by him San Salvador. For many years the island known popularly as Cat Island has borne this as its official name. At the southern end of Cat Island there is a great headland standing out into the sea called Columbus' Bluff. The Rev. F. Barrow Matthews, for many years Rector of Cat Island, still stoutly maintains the authenticity of this tradition. But the Americans have decided the matter, and the edict has gone forth that whoso denieth that Columbus made his landfall at the island known as Watlings—let him be *anathema* ! A certain latitude for pious opinion is still left as to the exact locality on Watlings where Columbus landed, and it is pretty generally admitted that it was certainly not the spot where the American expedition has put up a memorial stone. Dom Chrysostom Schreiner, Vicar Forane of the American Roman Catholic Mission in the Bahamas, contends that Columbus must have landed in the vicinity of the estate recently purchased by him on the island of Watlings, and thus he has enlisted the sympathy and support of that important organization, the Knights of Columbus, for his work. He was justly enraged a year or two ago when an American lady, married to an important resident of Turks Islands, Mr. B. C. Frith, revealed to a greedy and credulous American press that the true landfall of Columbus was to be found at the home of her adoption, Grand Turk !

Columbus' own description tells us that 'this island is rather large and very flat with bright green trees, much water, and a very large lake in the centre, without any mountain, and the whole land so green that it is a pleasure to look on it.' The inhabitants he describes as 'a very handsome people. Their hair is not curly but loose and coarse like horse-hair. In all the forehead is broad, more so than in any other people I have hitherto seen. Their eyes are very beautiful and not small, and themselves far from black, but the colour of the Canarians. . . . They came to the ship in small canoes, made out of the trunk of a tree like a longboat, and all of a piece, and wonderfully worked considering the country. . . . They neither carry nor know anything of arms, for I showed them swords, and they took them by the blade and cut themselves through ignorance. They have no iron, their darts being wands without iron, some of them having a fish's tooth at the end and others being pointed in various ways. . . . They should be good servants and intelligent, for I observed that they quickly took in what was said to them, and I believe that they would easily be made Christians, as it appeared to me they had no religion.'

Unhappily for these unfortunate Lucayan Indians, Columbus' compatriots came to the conclusion that the best method of bringing them under Christianizing influences was to deport them, and incidentally to avail themselves of their labour in the mines of Hispaniola, Cuba, and the

Spanish Main. Their descendants are practically extinct in the Bahamas to-day, though there are a few of our coloured people who bear unmistakable signs of a strain of Indian blood which may conceivably have been derived from a few stragglers of the aboriginal inhabitants.

Columbus visited three other islands of the Bahamas group : assuming that Watlings is the true site of his landfall they may be identified as the islands which to-day bear the names of Rum Cay, Long Island, and Crooked Island. From Crooked Island he sailed across that corner of the Great Bahama Bank in the neighbourhood of Ragged Island, which we call Columbus' Bank, to Cuba ; and so he passes out of the story of the Bahamas.

The first English settlers in the Bahamas of whom there is any record came from Bermuda. The colonization of Bermuda had begun in the year 1609. Forty years later a party of emigrants, dissatisfied with the strict conformity to the religion of the Established Church required in Bermuda, set out under the leadership of a certain Captain Sayle to find a country where they could be free to worship God in their own way. In course of time they landed on the deserted Spanish island of Cigateo which they re-named Eleutheria, the land of the free, a name which has become contracted into Eleuthera, one of the largest and most important islands of the Bahamas group.

Captain Sayle seems to have made several voyages backwards and forwards. Running for

shelter from a heavy storm on one occasion he discovered the harbour to which subsequently he gave the name of New Providence where the city of Nassau stands to-day. It was through the representations of Captain Sayle that the Bahamas were granted by Charles II to the Duke of Albemarle and five of the Lords Proprietors of the new colony of Carolina in 1670. From that date their somewhat chequered career as a British colony begins.

The harbour of New Providence was probably the decisive factor in causing the Lords Proprietors to establish the seat of Government there rather than in Eleuthera. The first Governor was a certain John Wentworth, who arrived in 1671, but he does not seem to have remained for more than two years, as we find a Mr. Chillingworth in office in 1673.

A priest recently on the Mission declares that the Bahamas were never meant to be lived in. Barren and rocky as they are, we cannot wonder that the early settlers sought their fortune on the sea rather than in the tamer pursuit of agriculture. The rich Spanish galleons provided an irresistible temptation to men of a sea-faring breed, and the Bahamas soon came to be noted as a nest of pirates. Whatever was attempted in the way of agriculture was done, as elsewhere in the tropical and subtropical colonies, by negro slave-labour. The Spaniards made frequent attempts at reprisals, and in 1703, assisted by the French, they made a descent on Nassau, ravaged the town, and carried off all the negroes. The rest of the

inhabitants took to the bush and, after the retirement of the expedition, made their way to Carolina. When Governor Birch arrived he found the island of New Providence completely uninhabited, and returned to England.

Nassau harbour, however, continued to be a convenient rendezvous for the pirates. One of the most notorious of them was an Englishman named Teach, who bore the nickname of Blackbeard. Blackbeard's Tower survives to this day on the high ridge of land east of S. Anne's Church. He was finally captured in 1718 off the coast of Carolina by Lieut. Maynard, and shot himself.

About the same time a new Governor, Woodes-Rogers, was sent to restore law and order. A stable Government was established and the colony began to advance. As protection to life and property was secured the population increased steadily through immigration. To-day the colony carries as its motto, *Piratis expulsis restituta commercia*. Yet a dash of the blood of the old pirates flows still in the veins of some of the colony's most respected citizens. It was not so many years ago that the population of Nassau woke up on the morning of some popular occasion to see flying in Rawson Square a black flag bearing the emblems of skull and cross-bones and blazoned with the motto, *Piratis restitutis expulsa commercia* ! I wish I dare reveal the identity of the author of that glorious joke.

It is popularly reputed that there are many hoards of buried treasure left by the pirates on

certain of the islands. Apparently it was the usual practice of a pirate skipper to select a member of his crew to assist him in the disposal of his wealth. When the hole was dug and the treasure safely stowed away the skipper would cut off his assistant's head in order that his ghost might remain to scare away any who might venture to try and find the money.

There is one old lady still alive at Stanyard Creek, Andros, who tells an extraordinary story of an apparition that came to her three times 'between sleeping and waking,' of two men, 'one with a cut-off head,' begging her to relieve them of a treasure buried near the creek mouth as they were, both of them, the murderer and the murdered, earthbound, and wanted to go to their rest. Old Nancy asked if she might take any one with her ; she was told that she might take two, and that she would be shown the spot, but while they were digging one of them must read the fourteenth chapter of S. John, 'In My Father's house are many mansions,' etc. She took her brother and her brother-in-law ; they found the place under a sea-grape tree ; they dug down till they had got their hands on the boxes ; and then they started quarrelling about which should have the bigger. Suddenly they were seized with an extraordinary panic and all ran different ways. When they mustered up courage to go back in broad daylight they found no sign of their work except a few scattered leaves of the Bible. I am told that a party of Americans having heard the story came

and searched with a divining rod and actually found the treasure, which they carried away. Old Nancy says that she doesn't mind, as the money was enchanted and could never have done her any good.

Governor Woodes-Rogers seems to have reigned until somewhere about 1730. There are some records of the colony to be found in the minutes of the vestry of Christ Church and the House of Assembly, as well as in the Registers of Births, Marriages, and Burials. The records are, however, very imperfect prior to the year 1784, owing partly to carelessness, partly to a brief occupation by the Spaniards in the year 1783. In 1787 the islands were reconveyed to the Crown by the Lords Proprietors, who received a consideration of £2,000 each. But the Bahamas have never been a Crown colony, and they are as jealously proud of their ancient self-governing constitution as the other two B's, Bermuda and Barbados. There are two branches of the Legislature : the Legislative Council, nominated by the Governor, and the House of Assembly, elected by the people. There is a Cabinet, nominated by the Governor, known since 1841 as the Executive Council, of which a certain number of members must belong to one or other of the branches of the Legislature.

The information available with regard to the provision for the religious needs of the inhabitants under the Lords Proprietors is of a very scrappy nature. It appears from a petition from the people for protection against Governor Elias Hasket

that there had been a clergyman stationed in Nassau towards the close of the seventeenth century. But the first name which has come down to us is that of a certain Mr. Guy, S.P.G. missionary at S. Andrew's, South Carolina, who visited the Bahamas in 1731 at the invitation of Governor Woodes-Rogers 'for the purpose of ministering to the inhabitants who had been without a minister for some years.' Landing at New Providence, April 12, 1731, he found 'a little neat church built of wood just finished.' This was the original Christ Church. Mr. Harcourt Malcolm, the present Speaker of the House of Assembly, who is one of the best authorities on the history of the colony, tells me that he does not think that this original church was on the site of the present cathedral, but nearer to what is now Rawson Square where the Government buildings stand. At Nassau Mr. Guy baptized eighty-nine children and three adults, at Harbour Island twenty-three children, and at Eleuthera thirteen. During his two months stay he celebrated the Holy Communion twice but did not have more than ten communicants on each occasion.

It was in consequence of representations from Mr. Guy that S.P.G. decided to appoint a missionary to the Bahamas, and the Rev. William Smith, an Irish schoolmaster, just ordained by the Bishop of London, was sent out in October, 1733. His visit was a short one : possibly he was only in deacon's orders and returned to England to be ordained priest. The records of S.P.G. show

his report to have been dated after his return to Nassau in 1737. He found a vestry in existence which consisted of twelve persons elected annually on Easter Monday. This vestry had the power to assess the inhabitants for parochial purposes. Its duties were very much enlarged by subsequent Acts of Legislature ; in fact in later years it functioned as a sort of municipal government very much like the old vestries of the London boroughs.

Mr. Smith died of fever in 1741, and while the parish was vacant Governor Tinker made his secretary, Mr. Snow, read prayers at the ' town-house.' When the parish was vacant again, in 1746, the Governor sent Mr. Snow to England to be ordained. The unfortunate man was a long time in reaching New Providence after his ordination. He was captured on the voyage, taken to Cuba, and so cruelly treated that when he did finally reach Nassau he was unable to officiate, and died before taking a single service.

In May, 1750, S.P.G. sent out the Rev. Robert Carter as Rector of Christ Church. He retained the incumbency for fifteen years, during which period a new church was built on the site of the present cathedral.

There is an interesting little note in the minutes of the vestry for the year 1770 ; it seems to foreshadow an important chapter in the recent history of Nassau trade. The vestry is informed by the minister ' That His Excellency the Governor [Thomas Shirley] had shipped eighteen casks of wine per Capt. Clark for Boston, the nett

proceeds of which he proposed to give towards raising the steeple.'

The American War of Independence was to have important effects upon the history of this colony. In 1776 Nassau was attacked and plundered by an American squadron but abandoned as untenable. Five years later it was again attacked, this time by the Spanish who had joined in the war against Great Britain. They occupied the town for two years. An old lady named Phoebe Watkins who only died in 1870 remembered this occupation ; she described to Archdeacon Wakefield how the Spanish Governor, Don Antonio Claraco, ran about wringing his hands when two armed vessels with a force of South Carolina militia under Colonel Deveaux arrived to recapture the town. In the address of Governor Maxwell at the opening of the Legislature in 1784 the capitulation of the colony to the Crown of Spain is mentioned by him, and the tyranny experienced by the inhabitants. In reply, the Legislature mildly hinted that if the colony had received a reasonable amount of Imperial protection the disaster would not have happened, in spite of the traitors amongst them who aided the Spaniards in their approach to the island.

I have always heard that the ships which brought Colonel Deveaux were manned by Harbour Island men. Harbour Island is a very small island lying north-east of Eleuthera and separated from it by a couple of miles of shallow water. In return for their services to the colony the inhabitants of Harbour Island were given free rights over a

large tract of land in the northern part of Eleuthera for themselves and their descendants for ever. A native of Harbour Island told me that Governor Shea made an attempt to take their rights away from them, 'but when our dear old Queen Victoria heard of it, she sent for him, and *she dressed him down!*'

The importance of the War of Independence to this colony lay in two results. Firstly, it brought the old colonial system to an end, and caused the reconveying of the Bahamas to the Crown by the Lords Proprietors as has been mentioned above. Secondly, it brought a large tide of immigration from Carolina and others of the Southern States: the 'Royal Refugees' these immigrants were called. At the beginning of 1784 the white population of the Bahamas did not exceed 1,750; besides these there were 2,300 blacks, making a total of 4,050. So far as we know New Providence, Harbour Island, and Eleuthera were the only islands in the group with any inhabitants. After the immigration the number of the whites was doubled and that of the coloured people trebled, so that in 1790 the population reached a total of 10,000.

About this time we get the first notice of friction between the Established Church and Dissent. During the period of the Spanish occupation Christ Church had been without a minister, 'the Rev. Mr. Barker having in an ungenteel manner deserted this living,' according to the minutes of the vestry of 1782. His successor, the Rev.

James Brown, was not inducted until the end of 1784. During the interregnum a certain Mr. Triebner obtained permission from the vestry to preach the Gospel in the church. He was a Dissenter, but it is not known to what denomination he belonged. Soon after Mr. Brown entered upon his duties he complained to the vestry that Mr. Triebner was in the habit of performing sacerdotal functions in the parish, which not only reduced his fees, but made it impossible to keep a correct register of births and marriages. The vestry memorialized the Governor on the subject and prayed him to prevent Mr. Triebner from continuing to do any parochial functions, or receive any fees for the same within the limits of the parish, except in the case of the persons of his own persuasion, or other Dissenters agreeable to the Act of Toleration.

We can hardly wonder that the subject of fees was rather a sore one with poor Mr. Brown when we look at the balance sheet of his personal income and expenditure which he laid before the vestry on his resignation in 1789.

<i>Income.</i>	<i>£</i>	<i>s.</i>	<i>d.</i>	<i>Expenditure.</i>	<i>£</i>	<i>s.</i>	<i>d.</i>
Fees for Baptisms, Marriages, and Burials - -	57	3	4	Household ex- penses - -	170	6	8
Salary from Gov- ernment - -	70	0	0	Rent - -	40	0	0
Island salary and House rent - -	58	5	6	Servants' wages - -	25	4	0
				Doctor's bills - -	2	2	0
	<u>£185</u>	<u>8</u>	<u>10</u>		<u>£237</u>	<u>12</u>	<u>8</u>

A deficit of £52. 3s. 10d. for one year was more than the poor man's pocket could stand, and the laity of the colony do not seem to have realized in those days any more than they do to-day that '*those who preach the Gospel must live of the Gospel.*'

Up to this time the collection of the parochial assessment and poor-rate, the education of poor children, and the regulation of the price of bread, had been the principal duties of the vestry, in addition to the upkeep of the church ; but in 1795 an Act was passed by the Legislature entrusting to it the issuing of liquor licences, the oversight of weights and measures, and the management of the market and slaughter houses.

In the same year an Act was passed for dividing the colony into parishes, erecting and repairing churches, providing parsonages, glebes, etc. A similar Act had been passed in 1768, but only one new parish had at that time been erected in addition to Christ Church, that is to say, S. John's, Harbour Island.

By this the following parishes were formed :

S. Patrick's, to comprise the island of Eleuthera.

S. Andrew's, to comprise Exuma and its Cays.

S. David's, to comprise Long Cay, Crooked Island, and Acklins.

S. Salvador's for Cat Island.

S. Paul's for Long Island, and

S. George's for the Caicos Group with Turks Islands.

It seems to have been in deference to the sentiment of the loyalist immigrants that the names

of the four patron saints of England, Scotland, Ireland, and Wales were chosen for these new parishes. However, the immediate practical results from the Act were small. It was all very well to constitute vestries, authorize pew rents and assessments, and assign salaries for rectors, but the churches were not built, and the great want was the same then as it is now, namely, priests for the work. Nevertheless we may probably attribute to this Act the provision of a parsonage and glebe at the Bight, Long Island (from which I always get a sheep whenever I visit there), also the glebe adjacent to the Rectory of Christ Church in 1802.

There are just two other items worth recording before we pass into the nineteenth century.

One is the erection of a town clock in the steeple of Christ Church. The reason given for it in the section of the Act is a somewhat curious one : ' For the benefit of the inhabitants and in order that no retailer of spirituous liquors shall plead ignorance of the time at which by this Act they are directed to shut up their shops,' etc. The old clock in the cathedral tower is still the property of the town. Unfortunately its reliability to-day would not be such as to satisfy the framers of the Act ; indeed its vagaries have recently had a very important bearing in the evidence given in a certain *cause célèbre* tried before the Supreme Court.

The other is the beginning of Church work in the Caicos Islands by the Rev. H. Jenkins in

1797. These islands are some four hundred miles distant from Nassau to the south-east or, as we say more commonly, up to Windward. To-day, with Grand Turk and Salt Cay, they form a separate dependency under the Government of Jamaica, although they are still attached to the Bahamas for ecclesiastical purposes. It would appear that Caicos was more important than Grand Turk in those days. To-day the position is completely reversed. The Turks Island group was settled by emigrants from Bermuda : one thing alone brought them there, the possibilities for making salt ; otherwise nothing could have induced anybody to settle on such barren and desolate rocks.

Reviewing the situation at the close of the eighteenth century we have heard something of all the islands up to windward of Nassau with the exception of Inagua and Mayaguana. We have heard nothing yet of the islands to leeward, that is between Nassau and the mainland of America, namely Abaco, Grand Bahama, the Biminis, and Andros. Their story will begin in the next century.

CHAPTER II

EARLY YEARS OF THE NINETEENTH CENTURY

THE oldest church building in the diocese is the Parish Church of S. Matthew. Although a small chancel has been added in later years, and there have been various attempts to beautify the interior, this quaint old Georgian building remains much as it was when the parish was formed in 1802 to meet the spiritual needs of the growing population in the eastern district of New Providence. The first Rector of S. Matthew's was the Rev. William Hepworth, who subsequently became Rector of Christ Church in the year 1817.

The fortunes of the Church in the colony at this time had sunk to a very low ebb, as S.P.G. had been compelled to withdraw all assistance. The debt owed by the Church in the Bahamas to this venerable Society is one that can never be forgotten, and it was only the pressure of sternest necessity which caused them to withdraw their grants. I imagine that it was the straitness of means resulting from the Napoleonic Wars which deprived the Society of the sinews for her spiritual warfare, but it is astonishing to note the small

figures of the Society's revenue in the year 1806. At this time the only clergyman in the Bahamas receiving assistance from the Society was the Rev. Richard Roberts, Rector of Christ Church. The last missionary sent by it for work in the out-islands had been the Rev. D. W. Rose, who was obliged to resign in 1804.

Mr. Rose had at first made his head-quarters in Long Island. In his first year's ministry there he had baptized fourteen whites and twenty-four coloured people. He complains that the negroes there had been 'misled by strange doctrines. They called themselves Baptists, the followers of S. John. . . . Their preachers, black men, were artful and designing, making a merchandise of religion.' Long Island proved very discouraging as he could not succeed in getting more than three of his parishioners to Communion.

In 1801 he paid a visit to Exuma, and in the following year took up his quarters there. On his first visit he found that the planters had assembled their negroes (about four hundred) at a pond for the purpose of raking salt ; a canopy was erected under which the ladies and gentlemen took their seats while he preached to them. He was very favourably impressed here with the cheerfulness and the responsiveness of the negroes, and ventured the opinion that he 'would rather be a slave in the Bahamas than a poor free cottager in England.' On Christmas Day in 1802 he dedicated the new church in Exuma, probably at Georgetown, and expressed his delight at being

able to discharge his duty in a consecrated place of worship instead of, as in Long Island, in old uninhabited houses. At this time the population of Exuma consisted of one hundred and forty whites, thirty-five 'free people,' and one thousand and seventy-eight slaves. Many of the negroes called themselves the followers of Mahomet, but they seem to have accepted Christian tenets pretty readily, as in less than a year he had baptized ninety-three adults and forty-one infants.

On a visit to Crooked Island in 1803 Mr. Rose baptized 'without any compensation' one hundred and fifty negroes; this practice of refusing fees had the effect of opening the eyes of the poor negroes to the extortion of their black preachers. When they saw him standing an hour or two, exhorting and inviting them to his mode of baptism, without any charge, they were persuaded that he had no pecuniary views but was only interested in their welfare, and by such a sacrifice of his emoluments even their 'bishops' submitted to the rites and ceremonies of the Church of England.

We spoke at the end of the last chapter of the beginnings of work in the Caicos by the Rev. H. Jenkins. A considerable population was now springing up at Turks Island, or Grand Cay, which is separated from East Caicos by a very nasty ocean passage of twenty miles wide. On his first visit to Grand Cay he remained a fortnight and ministered to a large congregation at the barracks, then converted into a church, but which, a few years ago, had been occupied by the military

that were stationed there 'in order to check the lawless and ungovernable temper of the people.' The few gentlemen of Turks Island had for some time adopted the laudable plan of assembling there on Sundays, when the Prayer Book service was used and a sermon read out of some approved author. A supply of Bibles and Prayer Books from S.P.G. proved 'very acceptable to the poor people there, who all faithfully promised to read them with attention,' and one William Darrell, 'a very decent and well-disposed negro,' opened a Sunday school and taught his countrymen *gratis*.

It is not quite clear in which year Mr. Jenkins left the Caicos, but it must have been prior to 1807, when S.P.G. withdrew their last missionary grant. From that date until 1835 the Church in the Bahamas was obliged to struggle on as best it could without any assistance from the Society. The census of 1810 showed the population to be 16,118, of whom some 10,000 were slaves.

It was about this time that the Church began to tackle the problem of education. The new Rector of Christ Church, Dr. Stephen, negotiated with Bray's Associates for a teacher for the children of the town. A certain Mr. Cooper was sent out by them, the expenses of his passage being voted by the Bahamas Government in 1817, and a school house was erected at the rear of the public buildings. It was a strictly Church school, any children failing to attend the morning and evening service on Sunday being dismissed from

the school. They sat in the western gallery at Christ Church, and were responsible for leading the singing. The hymnal in use was that of Dr. Watts, published by S.P.C.K., which Mr. Cooper thought was 'particularly calculated to attract the children to the Church of England'!

We shall have more to say later of the valued help which Bray's Associates have continued to give to Church schools in Nassau right down to the present day.

Dr. Stephen was Rector of Christ Church for seven years. Dean Swann, in his notes on the history of the diocese, ignores his connection with the establishing of the first Bray's school and dismisses him in a few lines: 'He is said to have been a man of studious habits and somewhat eccentric.' On his death in 1817 the Governor transferred the Rev. William Hepworth to Christ Church. For some years S. Matthew's remained without a clergyman. Mr. Hepworth officiated once every Sunday in each parish and celebrated the Holy Communion once a quarter. Nominally the Bahamas were under the ecclesiastical jurisdiction of the Bishop of London, but practically the Church in the colony was without a bishop until the Diocese of Jamaica was founded in the year 1824; and the office of Ordinary was vested in the Governor.

Up to this time our chief sources of information have been the Digest of S.P.G. Records, and the notes of Christ Church Vestry Minutes and House of Assembly Proceedings compiled by

Dean Swann and annotated by Archdeacon Wakefield. We are now able to turn to the pages of the *Autobiography* of the Rev. William Strachan, D.D., who was successively Rector of Turks Islands, S. Matthew's, and Christ Church. There are people still alive who can remember Dr. Strachan quite well, and his autobiography affords some very amusing reading besides giving a very good picture of the life of the colony between 1820 and 1850.

Dr. Strachan had originally studied for the Presbyterian ministry, but on moving from Scotland to England he conceived a strong attachment for the Established Church of the latter country and sought a title for Holy Orders. This was at last provided by Sir Lewis Grant, Governor of the Bahamas, who offered him the living of S. Matthew's, Nassau, and on this title he was ordained by Dr. Howley, Bishop of London, in December, 1821. Two months later he was admitted to the priesthood, and he arrived in Nassau in the following year.

Although he preached in S. Matthew's on the Sunday after his arrival it was to be some years before he was to take up his residence and begin his ministry there. The inhabitants of Turks Islands had earnestly petitioned the Governor to send them a rector ; the Governor was anxious to propitiate them, as the revenue accruing to the Government from the salt industry was a valuable one, and the Turks Islanders complained, with some justice, that Nassau, while taking their

money, completely neglected their interests. Accordingly the Governor begged Mr. Strachan to undertake this responsibility, at any rate for a time, promising that the living of S. Matthew's should be held *in commendam* for him.

The reverend gentleman has left us a vivid description of the discomforts of his voyage : conditions are not so very dissimilar to-day.

It was the month of July and the commencement of the much dreaded hurricane season, when no captain of a Bahama coasting vessel will venture out of the harbour but under very peculiar and urgent circumstances. The heat was overpoweringly oppressive ; the sea was the reverse of smooth : and my destined port lay some hundred miles off ; the vessel which was conveying me thither was of very limited dimensions, with its full complement of fetid cockroaches, and consequently indescribably uncomfortable ; and, to consummate my misery I was deadly sea-sick. Nausea, thou *monstrum horrendum*, thou bitterest of pills : thou most potent of emetics : thou most unendurable of corporal sufferances ! Most remediless and indomitable of the 'ills that flesh is heir to.' I would as soon brave the yellow fever as I would thee ! But, joking aside, I was so very ill, that the captain, apprehensive that by my incessant and violent retchings I might burst a blood-vessel, if not disgorge my very *viscera*, humanely put into harbour as frequently as he could during the passage, thereby affording some temporary relief at least to my sufferings. And I do seriously declare that were I ever to be convicted of any grave felony, the judge could not pass a severer sentence than by condemning me to the sea for a certain time in such a miserable vessel as that in which I was now sailing.

A hundred years have passed and there is still no more commodious or rapid means of transport between Nassau and Turks Islands.

A very few words are sufficient to describe Grand Turk : a number of vast heaps of salt piled up along the sea front waiting for shipment ; behind the settlement huge shallow ponds, divided into sections by low stone banks, into which the sea flows through canals regulated by sluices ; in those sections or pans where the water has evaporated thick layers of salt, taking a purplish hue, have formed a crust. The island is completely sterile—hardly a tree, no flowers, no herbage, nothing but Turks Head cactus (from which the islands derive their name), prickly pear, and low, meagre, stunted shrubs. The prosperity of the island depends upon the long droughts ; and these, while making plenty of salt, are the cause of much hardship. There are no wells in the island, so that the inhabitants are wholly dependent on the rain-water tanks. When these go dry, as was the case a year or two ago, water has to be shipped in great drums from New York or San Domingo and sold to the inhabitants by the tin.

When Dr. Strachan arrived he found that a parish church was in course of building. Had the people waited for their rector it might have been built on a more convenient site. As it is, it could hardly be more awkwardly placed. It is about a mile from the settlement, on the far side of the main salt pond ; tradition says that the contractor, in order to make as much as possible out of the contract, built it in his own stone quarry. It was completed and opened for divine

service in 1824. Dr. Strachan describes it as a neat and commodious edifice. Personally I think it is the ugliest church I have ever seen, though the church at Salt Cay was even uglier before it was dignified by the addition of its present chancel. Its length, instead of being east and west, is north and south. In the centre of the long east wall is a very tiny altar with a semi-circular rail around it, flanked by an enormous pulpit on one side and a reading desk on the other. There is a western annexe containing porch and vestry, with a gallery over, making the shape of the church that of a Greek cross *minus* the eastern arm. A second church exists to-day down on the sea front, known as S. Mary's, which is much more frequently used, but the old 'Back Church,' as S. Thomas' is familiarly called, still survives. Mattins is said there every Sunday morning, and once a month there is a celebration of the Holy Communion.

The year 1824 is an important date in the history of the Church in the West Indies as it marks the foundation of the first two West Indian bishoprics. In that year Dr. Coleridge was consecrated as first Bishop of Barbados, Dr. Lipscombe as first Bishop of Jamaica. The Diocese of Barbados included the Windward and Leeward Islands, with Trinidad and British Guiana ; the Diocese of Jamaica included the Bahamas, Turks Islands, and British Honduras.

In May, 1826, Bishop Lipscombe paid his first visit to the Bahamas ; Dr. Strachan was

summoned from Turks Islands to Nassau to meet him, and has left a record of his impressions :

The Bishop on landing was received by a full guard of honour from the troops in garrison, and an immense concourse of people, public officials, heads of departments, patricians and plebeians, etc., as well as by almost all the blackies in the island, free and slaves, besides numbers of others from the out-islands, whose discordant and senseless acclamations, ludicrous gestures, ridiculous antics and unmeaning visages, amply demonstrated that they had never seen a bishop before. His Lordship proceeded to Government House, and then to Christ Church, where His Majesty's Royal Letters Patent creating him Bishop of Jamaica and the Bahamas, etc., having been publicly read, and he duly installed, divine service was immediately proceeded with. Prayers having been read, the Bishop commenced the Ante-Communion Service, when I was struck, as well as the rest of the vast assemblage present, with his very melodious and powerful voice, and his most correct and impressive delivery. When the service was ended, I could not but pronounce him the best preacher I had ever heard. If I remember rightly, I had before heard that, when Dr. Lipscombe was one of the Select Preachers at Whitehall, his eloquence so attracted the special notice of Earl Bathurst, the then Colonial Secretary of State, as to produce his nomination to the Bishopric of Jamaica.

The Bishop's principal public acts in the island consisted in the consecration of the two parish churches and the several parochial burial grounds ; in the Confirmation of a vast number, not only of the young but of the middle-aged and the old, who had never before had any opportunity of being admitted to this sacred rite ; and in my institution on the twelfth of the month (May) to the Rectory of S. Matthew's Parish, to which I had already been presented by the Governor. But although I was then canonically instituted it was on the understanding that I was, as soon as he left, to return to Turks Islands, of which I was to continue to be the rector until the arrival of my successor from Jamaica, which would be within the course of the year.

Dr. Strachan was succeeded at Turks Islands

by the Rev. W. H. Lindsay, sent from Jamaica by the Bishop. He preached his farewell sermon there on the last Sunday of the year, Mr. Lindsay on the same day delivering his inaugural discourse. A lady admirer, a young widow in the parish, sent him the following lines on the two sermons :

The Rev. W. H. Lindsay.

In voice melodious, and in accent strong,
A streamlet, ruffled, seems to glide along :
Its clearness shows a cultured depth below,
Though weeds, as flowers, about its surface grow.

The Rev. W. Strachan.

But, mark that voice, which rises on the ear
Deep, awful, solemn, energetic, clear ;
A rushing cascade, beautiful, sublime,
Its thundering sound disclaims the power of time ;
When opposition rose within its course,
It soon was crushed by its majestic force.

Dr. Strachan, so far as one can gather, was a pre-Tractarian High Churchman. He had the old-fashioned High Churchman's strong abhorrence of Dissenters : at Turks Islands he noted with gratitude that there was but little danger to the Church to be apprehended from schism and dissent, there being then only one dissenting place of worship in the island, a Wesleyan chapel. On a certain occasion when the Wesleyan minister fell foul of him for speaking in favour of parents allowing their children to learn dancing, he remarks with a high scorn : ' As, however, I considered this gentleman, I mean the preacher, as well as his whole fraternity, as *laymen* only, I took

no other notice of his animadversions and invectives than by delivering a sermon from part of the fourth verse of the third chapter of Ecclesiastes, *There is a time to dance !* It is still related of Dr. Strachan in Nassau that he would cross the road to avoid meeting a Dissenter, saying that he could always smell a Methodist !

Had he had any sympathy with the Evangelical school of thought he could hardly have manifested his lack of sympathy with, and even his contempt for, the coloured race in the terms in which he did. The Church in the colony there seems to have been almost exclusively the Church of the white people. The coloured people were left to develop Christian institutions of their own, hence the fact that the coloured people of the Bahamas to-day are mostly of the Baptist persuasion. In spite of that, however, when the battle began to rage around emancipation, Dr. Strachan found himself on the side of the emancipationists, in opposition to his brother rector, Mr. Hepworth of Christ Church ; but possibly he may have been given his seat on the Council by the Governor, on his return to Nassau as Rector of S. Matthew's, with a kind of understanding that he should support the Governor's measures.

The story of emancipation demands a chapter to itself, but we cannot leave Dr. Strachan's autobiography without reproducing his account of his wedding :

On the 22nd of June, 1830, a young lady, Miss Charlotte Brace, a daughter of the late T. Brace, Esq., of Clifford, Here-

fordshire, to whom I had been previously engaged, arrived from London. An *on dit* of this circumstance had preceded her arrival. My brother-rector had gone home on leave and I was acting as rector in both parishes. The people being on the *qui vive* as to when, and in which of the two churches, our marriage was to be solemnized, and as I was well aware that an innumerable larger concourse of persons would be witnesses to this ceremony than the law required, I was determined to play them a trick, to balk their idle curiosity, and to teach them to mind their own business. With this in view, I gave directions that every window and door of the Metropolitan Church should be opened very early next morning, and everything to be ready by 11 o'clock a.m. Accordingly we proceeded to Christ Church, at the appointed hour, in the closed carriage of the Chief Justice Munnings. When we reached the church gate, I perceived in a moment that the ruse had succeeded admirably; that the fish had greedily swallowed the deceitful bait; that the ducks had been successfully decoyed into the snare; and that Christ Church was literally crammed with patricians and plebeians, with blacks and whites. After stopping for a minute at the gate as if about to make our entrance into the church, I whispered to the coachman to drive as quickly as possible to my church, distant nearly a mile off, thus leaving the stupefied, grievously disappointed, and, no doubt, much chagrined, sight-seekers, many of whom, particularly the officers of the garrison, and the young misses of the town, had most probably spent much of their time that morning at their respective toilets, to leave the church looking, of course, like simpletons, as they were. It was with the utmost difficulty that, on our way to my church, I could suppress my risibility at what had occurred. In a few minutes we reached my pretty little church, where we had it all to ourselves, the persons present being the Rev. J. Mainwaring, of Caius College, Cambridge, the officiating minister, and private tutor and chaplain in the family of His Excellency the Governor, together with my *dandy-clerk*, the groomsmen and the bridesmaid, the bridegroom and the bride, a very small congregation when contrasted with that which had assembled in the town church.

Dr. Strachan with all his pedantry and egotism seems to have been possessed of a certain sardonic humour : we must remember that he was a Scotsman. Ten years after his marriage he had an unfortunate accident which deprived him of the sight of one eye ; subsequently he went completely blind ; so that in 1855 he was compelled to resign, after a period of service in the Bahamas, thirty-three years, which has not been equalled by many clergymen before or since. The unfortunate accident which resulted in the loss of his first eye was caused, he tells us, by running it, ' while stooping to pick up a paper, which I was writing out, against the sharp-pointed corner of a chair with such force that the eye was completely forced out of its socket and I lost almost all the blood that was in my body.'

It is a little strange that Dr. Strachan makes no mention of the rebuilding of Christ Church, of which he became rector, in succession to Mr. Hepworth, in 1842. This was done by a vote of the Legislature of 1830. The steeple had cracked and was pronounced dangerous. While the steeple was removed it was suggested that the church be added to in order to provide more accommodation for the blacks. This was not found to be possible and so it was decided to rebuild the church entirely.

The desire to provide more accommodation for the blacks was something with which Dr. Strachan would have had very little sympathy, and this may be the reason why he has passed

over the rebuilding of Christ Church lest his feelings should get the better of him and cause him to say more than would have been wise or right.

It is also rather strange that Dr. Strachan should have omitted any mention of the coming to the diocese of Archdeacon Trew. We shall have a good deal more to say later on of this worthy. It is conceivable that the fact that the appointment of the Archdeacon displaced him from his position as Bishop's Commissary for the Bahamas may have engendered some little bitterness. It is also probable that the Archdeacon's strong Evangelicalism did not serve to commend him to one of Dr. Strachan's old-fashioned High Church views.

The very low ebb to which the withdrawal of S.P.G. missionaries had reduced the Church in the Bahamas is evidenced by Dr. Strachan's mention of a visit paid by him, at the request of Governor Colebrooke, to the parishes of S. Patrick, S. Paul, and S. David, 'for the purpose of administering the Sacrament of Baptism . . . to the inhabitants who had never before had a clergyman among them.' That was in the year 1835, just before complete emancipation came into force. Emancipation was very quickly to change the whole character of the colony: not until after emancipation did the Church begin to show any activity in regard to the coloured people. When the Church did begin to energize on their behalf she was too late; the majority of them were

already affiliated to the Baptist denomination. And then the pendulum swung the other way : as the Church concentrated more and more upon the coloured people she lost the allegiance of the whites. By this time the Wesleyan Methodists were in the field, and it is to that religious body that the larger number of white people in the colony have drifted.

CHAPTER III

SLAVERY AND EMANCIPATION

THE slave trade is one of the greatest blots upon our reputation as a Christian nation, and it is little palliation to plead that England was no worse than other Christian nations. In the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries, English merchants, seeing the opportunities for gain which would accrue from supplying the plantations and settlements of the New World with the labour needed for their development, built up large fortunes out of this abominable traffic in human flesh. It is no part of our purpose to dilate upon the sufferings of the unfortunate Africans carried away from their own continent to America and the West Indies by the slavers. The slave trade had been abolished for the British Empire in 1807, but the institution of slavery flourished in the West Indies for another quarter of a century, and much longer in America. Wilberforce and his allies, however, were not going to be content until they had aroused the national conscience for the abolition of the whole thing root and branch.

The lot of the slaves in the Bahamas was not, as we have already seen from the report of one

of the S.P.G. missionaries, a specially unhappy one. Wilberforce had been on the war-path for some years, but it was not until 1815 that slave owners in the Bahamas got wind of the fact that movements were on foot in the mother-country for interfering with their institutions and their property. This came as a great shock.

The English Government was faced with the difficulty of making its laws against the importation of any more slaves into British colonies effective. Proposals had been made in Parliament for establishing a scheme for the registration of slaves, to be renewed at regular intervals of years. The news of this caused the slave owners in the Bahamas to take fright at once. Not only did it seem to them that their property was being jeopardized by people who knew nothing whatever of local conditions, and that, without slave labour, the industries of the colony would soon be brought to a standstill ; but also they were intensely jealous of any interference with the constitutional rights of the local Government. Lord Castlereagh was fully alive to this latter point and, in reply to Wilberforce's contention in the House of Commons that the Imperial Parliament should impose its will upon the colonies, regardless of remonstrance, he suggested that it would be better to ask the co-operation of the various Colonial Legislatures, as 'nothing short of absolute necessity should urge the assertion of the right of Parliament to legislate for the Colonies, and especially on a measure that would subject them

to a tax without their own consent.' Accordingly Parliament decided that the Home Government should lay down general principles and invite the local legislatures to pass their own statutes on the lines of the recommendations received.

As it happened, there was no colony in which the proposed scheme of registration was more difficult of application than the Bahamas. In Jamaica or Barbados it was a comparatively simple matter ; but with a group of islands stretching seven hundred miles from Grand Bahama to Grand Turk, and with no communications except by means of small sailing boats, registration would be extremely difficult and of no practical value, as it would be impossible for the central authority to keep track of all the slaves registered or unregistered in distant out-islands, and the expense connected with any attempt to do so would be an intolerable burden upon a poor colony. The House of Assembly made a strong protest against the Bahamas being included in the scheme ; but to have excluded the Bahamas would have vitiated the whole scheme, as there would then have been only too much likelihood of the privilege being exploited to make the Bahamas a centre of slave traffic for the whole of the West Indies.

At this moment, when Governor Cameron was doing his bit to persuade the House of Assembly to pass the statute for registration, an unfortunate incident occurred which put the fat in the fire. The Attorney-General Wylly drew the attention of the House to himself by an opinion he gave in

regard to the importation and removal of slaves; rumours about his alleged connection with the African Institution in London ran like wildfire down Bay Street; the House sent for him; he refused to appear; the House voted his arrest for contempt; the Speaker signed the warrant and the Attorney-General was imprisoned; an hour later he was released by order of the Chief Justice; the House passionately attacked the Chief Justice for his action, and then the Governor dissolved the House.

The whole of Nassau was now in a ferment; public meetings were held; resolutions were passed; and petitions were forwarded to the Prince Regent. When the new House of Assembly met, the old members came back more bitter than ever. There was a dead-lock in legislation, as the Attorney-General and Chief Justice had sufficient influence in the Council to block the passage of bills which came up from the Lower House.

The situation grew even worse when, upon the removal of the Governor from the colony, Chief Justice Munnings himself was deputed to administer the Government. The arrival of the new Governor, General Lewis Grant, a conciliatory and tactful man, paved the way for a patched-up peace. But meanwhile the establishment of the registration system had been delayed four years. Under strong pressure from the Governor a Bill satisfactory to the Home Government was at last passed.

The slave owners were, however, perfectly right in believing that this was the thin end of the wedge, and that the English reformers would not rest until they had destroyed slavery entirely.

That was exactly what the British nation was demanding : their ancestors were responsible for the importation of these unfortunate Africans into British territory ; the responsibility with them was to do everything possible to ameliorate the conditions of their life, and to raise them step by step in the social scale, until they were fit to enjoy the privileges of British citizenship.

The next step on the part of the Home Government was the requiring of the colony to establish a new slave code under which certain rights and privileges were conceded to the slaves. The colonists urged that all this was unnecessary, as most of the things required were already established by custom ; but the Home Government was firm in its insistence that they should be guaranteed by statute. Its demands were met piecemeal, beginning with a statute of 1824, until by 1829 they had all been conceded.

Among the more important rights now guaranteed to slaves were the right to hold and bequeath property, and the right of marriage subject to the owner's consent ; the separation of husband and wife by sale was forbidden, and children under fourteen were not allowed to be separated from their parents. Slave courts were established in the out-islands, and gradually slave evidence came to be admitted. All slave owners were required

to instruct their slaves in the Christian religion ; and the tax on manumissions was declared illegal. Sunday labour was expressly forbidden. Restrictions were placed upon the punishments which might be inflicted on slaves.

The real battle came when Governor Grant was replaced by Sir James Smyth in 1829. The new Governor was in strong personal sympathy with the abolitionists, and had a great desire to do what he could for the betterment of the coloured people. He was determined to give full effect to the new provisions recently passed by the Legislature, and he was especially anxious to do away with the practice of flogging female slaves. It was on this last point that he came into conflict with the House of Assembly. For two years he had been urging the House in vain to pass a statute against this practice, and then came a particularly flagrant act of cruelty on the part of a slave owner who happened to be a member of the House. The Governor sent down a message drawing their attention to the case and suggesting that they should take appropriate action. The House, already thoroughly exasperated, rose in fury against this 'unwarranted and wholly unprecedented' encroachment upon their privileges. From that moment it was war to the knife between them and the Governor. Dissolutions and new elections followed in rapid succession with little effect upon the personnel of the House. The Crown was petitioned for the removal of the Governor, but the Home Government, so far from showing any

sympathy, intimated that they would support the Governor in carrying on the Government without the assistance of the legislative body. This, Governor Smyth, like Charles I, proceeded to do, and, to the chagrin of the members of the late House and their supporters, he made a complete success of it.

The Governor's success, however, was not viewed with unmixed approval even by the members of his own Council ; the leader of the opposition to the Governor in the Council was Chief Justice Munnings, who seems to have fancied that His Excellency had blocked his path to promotion, and had become rather an embittered old man. But an opportunity soon afforded itself for the Governor to increase the number of his own supporters on the Council, and from that time onward the disaffected party was always outvoted.

Another heavy responsibility which fell upon the shoulders of the Governor came from the fact that the slave trade, although prohibited, was by no means extinct. The dangers of navigation in Bahamas waters caused frequent wrecks, and these waters were constantly patrolled by His Majesty's ships. So it happened that cargoes of Africans were continually being brought in, either from wrecks or from slavers captured by some man-of-war. Directly they landed in British soil they were free men and the Governor was obliged to become their guardian.

After one or two unsatisfactory experiments,

settlements were made at Carmichael and Adelaide for these new inhabitants, but by far the largest settlement was that established south of the town of Nassau, over the hill, in the district now known as Grants Town. Some of them were enlisted in the 2nd West Indian Regiment, some of them bound under articles of apprenticeship, and some put on to public work. The road through the Pine-Barren in the centre of the island, connecting up Grants Town with Carmichael and Adelaide, is one piece of their work which still remains. The Governor made considerable efforts to provide for their education, in which he was assisted by the Bishop of Jamaica ; churches were built both at Adelaide and Carmichael, and school houses as well ; but these measures only served to render him the more unpopular with the white people.

It was useless, however, for them to resist the onward sweep of the tide ; and the tide which was to sweep away slavery altogether in British dominions was now in full flood. The hated Governor was succeeded in 1833 by Mr. Blayney Balfour, but there was no change of policy. In England the existence of the Government depended now upon their bowing to public opinion by the introduction of a measure for the abolition of slavery. The steady opposition of the Colonial Legislatures to the measures recommended by the Home Government for amelioration of the lot of the slaves had convinced the ministry that it was hopeless to wait or look for

their co-operation in an Emancipation Act. No course remained, if the Government was to continue in office, but coercion. In the spring of 1833 an Act of the Imperial Parliament was passed to come into force on August 1, 1834, for the emancipation of all slaves within the British dominions. It was suggested that the Colonial Governments should arrange for an *interim* period of apprenticeship before the freed slaves entered upon complete liberty. The rights of property were not to be wholly disregarded, and a sum of £20,000 was voted out of the pockets of the British taxpayers for compensation to the masters deprived of so much human capital.

The House of Assembly wished to register a protest against this interference of Parliament with the affairs of the colony ; they were warned by the Lieutenant-Governor that it would be inadvisable to do so. Finally, after a certain amount of skirmishing, they gave way and passed the necessary Act for giving effect to emancipation in the colony and making provision for the establishment of the apprenticeship system.

Fears were expressed among the white people that there might be uprisings and disorder among the slaves, but, with the exception of a little disturbance at Turks Islands, everything passed quite peacefully. The apprenticeship system was a wise design by which the ex-slaves, while under a state of semi-dependence upon their late masters, were gradually trained to command themselves and exercise the responsibilities of free men. They

were divided into two classes, praedials who were working on the land, and non-praedials engaged in other occupations—artisans, sailors, etc. The period of apprenticeship was to last for four years in the case of non-praedials, for six years in the case of praedials. As a matter of fact the colony released all its apprentices from their indentures at the end of the four years period. This came just at the beginning of the reign of Queen Victoria ; it was attributed, like some other things, to her personal orders, and is responsible for the extravagant veneration in which her memory is still held among the coloured people in the Bahamas.

During the apprenticeship period special justices were appointed for the out-islands to see that the new laws were duly observed both on the side of employers and employed. This seems to have been the beginning of the system of resident magistrates, now called commissioners, for the out-islands.

The white people took steps to protect themselves against disorder among the coloured folks, who formed the great majority of the population, by an extremely stringent Vagrancy Law which contained a clause forbidding, under penalty of five days imprisonment, 'the assembling for no specific and lawful object, loitering and carousing in the liquor shops, loud singing or whistling, flying kites in or near highways, and calling loudly in the markets to attract customers.'

In spite, however, of their fears the transition period passed quietly and peaceably ; it was no

use continuing to kick against the pricks, wiser to make the best of things and endeavour to secure the satisfactory working of the new order. There had never been any such bad feeling between slave owners and slaves as would justify any serious anxiety as to reprisals when the slaves were freed, such as had been in French and Spanish colonies. On the contrary, the negroes of the Bahamas are generally recognized to be more amenable and docile, as well as more advanced socially and educationally, than in any other part of the West Indies.

And again, although emancipation came in the teeth of strong opposition from the colonial white people, it brought no such evils in its train as were brought by abolition in the Southern States of America. There were no bitter memories of defeat in battle, of robbery and injustice, to poison the hearts of the white people against the coloured race for generations to come. No crushing poverty ensued to upset the very foundations of the social order. And, on the part of the coloured people, there was no sense of bitter hostility from their former masters to make them arrogant and assertive, as is so often the case with the American negro. The race war in the Southern States is perpetuated by incidents unknown in the Bahamas. I believe it is a fact that there is no case on record of any assault by a Bahamian negro on a white woman, and so there has never been any occasion for such horrible measures of reprisals as lynching. There are occasional causes of

irritation between the two races, there are certain 'colour-lines' which are still drawn, more strongly in some places than in others ; but for the most part conditions have been adjusted by mutual good sense on a perfectly happy basis. Every now and then some agitation disturbs the balance, but the population of the Bahamas generally have long realized that prosperity depends upon mutual co-operation between the races, and that antagonism can do no good to any one.

Some of the slave owners treated their slaves with considerable generosity at the time of emancipation. This may have been partly due to the fact that they saw no way of continuing to cultivate their lands without slave labour. At any rate some of them, e.g. Lord Rolle, who owned a large part of the island of Exuma, gave all their land to their ex-slaves. The two settlements of Rolletown and Rolleville still keep Lord Rolle's memory alive in Exuma ; but, in addition to that, since the slaves all took their master's surname (or, as it is more commonly called in the Bahamas, 'title') on emancipation, the number of Rolles both at Exuma and elsewhere is legion. 'My grandfather was a Lord Rolle man,' is a common thing to be told by a native.

It would seem strange to us in these days that in so grave a moral question as that of slavery the Church in the colony should have failed to lift her voice or to make her influence felt. The reason, however, is not far to seek. There were only two clergymen then in the Bahamas, exclu-

sive of Turks Islands—Mr. Hepworth, the Rector of Christ Church, and Dr. Strachan, then Rector of S. Matthew's. Unfortunately, as we learn from Dr. Strachan's autobiography, they took diametrically opposite views of the matter, and, while Dr. Strachan, as we have seen above, supported Governor Smyth on the Council, Mr. Hepworth joined the opposition. I am inclined to suspect that Mr. Hepworth may have himself owned slaves for domestic purposes ; at any rate Christ Church Rectory, which was occupied by him, possesses ample and commodious slave quarters. I am by no means certain that Dr. Strachan did not own slaves, too ; he makes no mention of it, but Strachan is not an uncommon name among the coloured people to-day.

Again, although Dr. Strachan was a supporter of the Governor he nowhere expresses any enthusiasm for the Governor's ideals in regard to slavery. We have already seen that his prejudices were by no means favourable to the coloured race. He states the arguments of the advocates of slavery so very fairly and temperately that one cannot but suspect that he has a lurking sympathy with them. They claimed, he says :

That slavery was sanctioned by God Himself among the ancients under the Patriarchal Dispensation, and amongst the Jews, His chosen and highly favoured people, under the Mosaic Institution ; that it was found by our Saviour when He appeared upon the earth, extensively established in the Roman Empire, embracing nearly the whole civilized world ; those same writers contended that, neither Jesus Christ, nor His Apostles after Him, expressed any disapprobation of slavery, or left on record any

precepts directing its discontinuance and abolition; and those same writers have, from those premises, deduced the conclusions, that no man or set of men in our day, unless they can produce a new revelation from heaven, are entitled to pronounce it wrong; and that to brand them who, in the providence of God, are holders of slaves with the epithet of *anti-Christian* is extreme presumption.

On the other side, all that he cared to say in regard to his support of the Governor's policy is that he was firmly convinced, and always would be, 'that Sir James, in the course he was pursuing, was influenced solely by the dictates of a *mens sibi recti conscia*.'

It was a great opportunity lost by the Church, and there were other religious denominations ready to step in and cater for the spiritual needs of the people. The Presbyterian Kirk was already established concurrently with the Church of England and supported from the Colonial Exchequer, but it made no attempt to carry on any extensive work among the negroes. We have already seen that a Native Baptist organization had sprung up among the slaves. That was to be followed by a Baptist Mission from England. Both the Baptists and the Wesleyans were careful to send out capable leaders.

At Harbour Island, one of the largest and most important centres of population outside New Providence, the old church built in the previous century had been destroyed by a hurricane and no attempt had been made to rebuild it. In 1835 the Wesleyan chapel was the only place of worship there. At Rock Sound in Eleuthera,

where there was a population of two thousand five hundred, there was no minister or place of worship of any kind.

A considerable bitterness of feeling against the Established Church was engendered by a number of irritating and pettifogging restrictions upon the ministrations of Dissenting ministers in regard to marriages, burials, etc. At one time no Dissenting minister could legally perform a marriage in a community where there was an Anglican clergyman. Sir Francis Cockburn, who became Governor in 1838, was a Churchman of very strong views, and his policy tended to embitter the Dissenters still further. From that time we may date the beginning of the struggle for religious equality, which was to end with that blessing in disguise—the Disestablishment and Disendowment of the Church in the Bahamas.

CHAPTER IV

NASSAU A BISHOPRIC

ON the death of Dr. Lipscombe, first Bishop of Jamaica, Dr. Aubrey Spencer, Bishop of Newfoundland, was translated to the vacant see. One of his first acts was to form the Bahamas into an archdeaconry. The Rev. Dr. John McCammon Trew was appointed first Archdeacon of Nassau and the Bahamas, and Bishop's Commissary, with a stipend of £1,000 a year paid by the Government, and a seat on the Governor's Council. He is described by his son-in-law, Mr. Swann, as 'an excellent man, evangelical in his doctrinal views and most zealous in his promotion of every good work.' He was Archdeacon of Nassau for twelve years, and then exchanged with Dr. Caulfield, rector of a parish in Ireland, who became the first Bishop of Nassau.

Archdeacon Trew died at Cheltenham in 1868. Early in his period of office he established a society known as 'The Bahamas Church Aid Society' to raise funds for the assisting of clergymen, catechists, and schoolmasters, and for the distribution of Bibles, Prayer Books, and tracts. The success of this society testifies to an awakening of the conscience of the wealthier members of

the community in regard to the spiritual condition of the people of the out-islands.

Bishop Spencer paid his first visit to Nassau in 1845 and consecrated Christ Church on June 5th. On the occasion of his second visit, three years later, he was able to congratulate the colony on the progress made in Church extension, and to consecrate, as a chapel-of-ease to Christ Church, a building in the western district, which had been used as a Bray's Associates School, under the title of S. Mary's. The first priest to officiate regularly in this chapel was the Rev. H. Macdougall, Garrison Chaplain.

In 1845 a district chapelry for the southern suburbs had been created by Act of the Legislature, and the sum of £120 a year voted to provide a stipend for the minister. A school which had been in existence there for some years was used for divine worship, and this schoolroom also was now consecrated by Bishop Spencer under the title of S. Agnes.

The first minister of S. Agnes' was the Rev. W. J. Woodcock. He was a man of private means, and, on his death in 1851, he left the whole of his property in trust to the Bishop of the Diocese, the Rector of Christ Church, the Archdeacon, and the Curate of S. Agnes' for the maintenance of day schools for coloured people in Bain's Town. These schools are known to-day as the Woodcock Schools. If the estate had been more skilfully managed by the trustees in past days they would have been a very wealthy foun-

dation ; unfortunately it was not so, and they are only able to be carried on with assistance from a grant made to the Bishop by Dr. Bray's Associates.

In the course of this second visit to the Bahamas, in 1848, Bishop Spencer urged the necessity of providing a suitable building for the accommodation of the Sunday school of Christ Church and as a centre for other Church activities. A committee to give effect to this proposal was at once formed by the Archdeacon, a considerable sum of money was raised, and a site purchased at the top of George Street, above the church. In the following year the foundation-stone was laid with great ceremony by Mrs. Gregory, wife of the Governor. The building, which is a very large one, was completed and formally opened in the following year, and was known as the Church Missionary Hall. It was vested in the Bishop of the Diocese, the Archdeacon, and the Rector of Christ Church. It has proved a valuable asset to the colony generally as well as to the diocese. In 1854 a Grammar School for boys was established, which was carried on intermittently there until 1922. Among its most capable and successful head masters were Archdeacon Wakefield and the Rev. Audley J. Browne. In 1925, the Grammar School having come to an end, the High School for Girls, managed by the Sisters of S. Peter's Community, Horbury, was transferred there from the very incommodious buildings which it had occupied previously. A very large proportion of members

of Nassau's aristocracy owe their education to these two institutions. Since the formation of the diocese the Church Hall has also been used for such diocesan purposes as the meetings of the Synod, in addition to the parochial activities of Christ Church.

In 1855 Dr. Strachan's blindness compelled him to resign the living of Christ Church, and the Archdeacon obtained the appointment for his youthful son-in-law, the Rev. Robert Swann, Curate of S. Agnes', despite the fact that he was only in deacon's orders. This led to an increase in the tension which already existed between the Archdeacon and the Bishop. While the Rector of Christ Church remained a deacon, Mr. Duckett, the Curate of S. Mary's, was deputed to do priestly functions at the parish church. His insistence upon saying the Absolution at Morning Prayer earned him a sharp reprimand from the Archdeacon, who did not wish the young rector's lack of ecclesiastical standing thus publicly accentuated. Mr. Duckett appealed to the Bishop, who naturally upheld him, to the chagrin of the Archdeacon.

Apart from the fact that Archdeacon Trew was a pronounced Low Churchman while Bishop Spencer belonged to the other school of thought, the Archdeacon had, in the earlier years of his administration, got himself into bad odour with the Bishop in regard to certain scandals which he had circulated against Governor Mathew. Whether there were, or were not, good grounds for challenging the morality of the Governor's

private life is rather uncertain. The Colonial Office in London acquitted him of the charges brought against him, but relieved him of the government of the colony. But the Bishop seems to have thought that Archdeacon Trew's methods, if not his motives, were blameworthy. His actions had given some colour to the suspicion that they were actuated, in part at least, by a fancied sense of personal grievance against the Governor. At any rate the Bishop felt compelled to administer a severe censure to the Archdeacon.

But for the tension between Bishop Spencer and Archdeacon Trew the Bahamas would probably have been established as an independent diocese much earlier than was the case.

Although the Bishops of Jamaica did their duty to these scattered islands in a thoroughly conscientious fashion, and both Bishop Lipscombe and Bishop Spencer were personally well liked and trusted, the growth of the population and the rapid development of Church life created a desire for closer and more effective episcopal supervision.

The idea of a bishop for the Bahamas and Bermuda had been mooted as early as 1848, but the Bishop of Jamaica, having no wish to see Dr. Trew appointed, opposed the separation of this archdeaconry from his diocese. The circumstances would have made any other appointment impossible, as the Government could only provide for the stipend of a bishop by diverting that already appropriated to the Archdeacon.

Archdeacon Trew effected an exchange with the Rev. Charles Caulfield in 1856, and Dr. Caulfield arrived in the Bahamas as Archdeacon in 1858. Ecclesiastical affairs in Jamaica were in a rather anomalous condition. Bishop Spencer had retired to England and left the administration of the diocese to a Suffragan-Bishop of Kingston, Dr. Courtney. His health was not equal to his continuing in Jamaica, but, in order to save the diocese from the reduction in the Bishop's stipend, which was to take effect on his death or resignation, he remained nominally Bishop of Jamaica for many years while residing in England.

The Bahamas had had no visit from a bishop for seven years when Bishop Courtney came in 1857. This was the occasion of the first Ordination ever held in Nassau, when five deacons were ordained to the priesthood, among them Mr. Fisher, Curate of S. Agnes', and Mr. Saunders, acting-Rector of S. Matthew's. The ministry of these two clergymen in Nassau lasted for upwards of fifty years. Mr. Fisher was, we believe, the first clergyman in the diocese to be known by the title of 'Father,' a title now adopted by many of the native Baptist ministers. Mr. Saunders, on the other hand, who gloried in the upholding of the Protestant flag, was universally known as 'Parson.'

There were now thirteen clergymen in the diocese, in addition to the Archdeacon. Turks Islands and the Caicos each had a priest of their

own, Mr. Maxwell (father of a recent Chief Justice of the Leeward Islands) and Mr. Astwood. There was a resident priest at Harbour Island, Governor's Harbour, Inagua, and Long Island. Mr. Higgs looked after Cat Island, Watlings, Rum Cay, Crooked Island, Long Cay, and Acklins, truly an enormous area. The even larger area of Abaco, Grand Bahama, Bimini, Berry Islands, and Andros was shepherded by Mr. Saunders until the time of his transference to S. Matthew's.

The Bahamas might well demand a bishop of their own. Governor Bayley was himself strongly in favour of the proposal and took the necessary steps to secure its being carried into effect. The result was that the new Archdeacon was appointed Bishop of Nassau by Her Majesty's letters patent and consecrated at Lambeth on S. Andrew's Day, 1861.

Bishop Caulfield returned to Nassau on May 23, 1862, receiving a warm welcome. On the 17th of June the letters patent constituting Nassau a diocese, Dr. Caulfield its first Bishop, and Christ Church its first Cathedral, were publicly read in Christ Church by Mr. Bruce L. Burnside, Bishop's Registrar.

The Bishop's tenure of office was a very brief one, as he succumbed to an attack of yellow fever, then very prevalent in the colony, on September 4th of the same year.

To this generation the first Bishop of Nassau is but a shadowy—almost legendary—figure. It seems worth while, therefore, to reproduce the

article about him which appeared in the columns of the *Nassau Guardian*, written, it was believed, by Governor Bayley :

Yesterday afternoon was signalized by a ceremony which will leave a sad and lasting impression on all who witnessed it. On that occasion a large concourse of people of every class and sect followed to the grave the remains of the Right Reverend Charles Caulfield, first Bishop of Nassau ; a Prelate who, during his brief Episcopate, had endeared himself to the members not only of his own flock, but of every Christian society in this city. The unfeigned sorrow which was called forth by his untimely decease testifies to the possession of qualities which, estimable separately, become admirable when found in combination. Piety, sincerity, charity are each a great virtue—but when to these are added a manly frankness, a genial cheerfulness, a hearty and practical sympathy with the wants and feelings of all, a courageous honesty of purpose, tempered by a considerate courtesy—the union of qualities so varied and so excellent constitutes a character the effect of which is as powerful as the recollection is lasting.

The best tribute to the memory of the deceased Bishop is the sentiment which his loss has caused. Every one feels that he has lost a personal friend. Every one had in turn been encouraged by that cheery voice, gladdened by that hearty laugh, consoled by that tone of sympathy and kindness, which took away the sting of reproof and deprived admonition of all asperity. In sickness, in distress, in the severest of domestic woes, how comforting was his presence, how consoling his words ! Pious, he avoided the common ‘ piosities.’ Profoundly impressed with a belief in the doctrines of his Church, he never made them the vehicle of condemnation or invective, nor the material of controversy and strife. Hating wrong, scorning injustice, loathing falsehood, his generous and kindly nature forbade him to impute to any one deliberate commission of the acts which he most detested. Devoted to the duties of his holy profession, he did not regard them as things apart from the business and interests of ordinary life, but as elements which should flavour the whole

plan and course of existence. He did not think it unbecoming in him as a Christian bishop to feel and to avow an interest in all that affected the temporal welfare of the community in which he was placed. Steam communications, sanitary measures, every project which could promote the material prosperity of the colony found in him an ardent and zealous supporter. And, had it pleased the Great Disposer of all to preserve his life for some critical period in the history of the colony, we might have seen that combination of practical ability and devoted zeal which stayed the horrors of famine, and calmed the desperation of thousands in the afflicted and panic-stricken town of Skibbereen.

The key to the lamented Bishop's character was to be found in the fact that he was a gentleman—naturally and instinctively a gentleman. Endowed by birth with the qualities of the Christian believer; happy in the temperament which, free from all shyness and reserve, saved its possessor from the vulgar imputation of pride; he gave free vent to the effusion of a mind full of geniality and warmth. Naturally courteous, kind, and gentle, his religious impressions gave a strength, solidity, consistency, and influence to characteristics which might have otherwise been deemed only amiable or pleasing. As it was, men felt, when they observed his course of life, how well he followed in the path of Him Who, not irreverently, but with deep and just meaning, has been called by an old poet, *The First Gentleman that ever lived*.

But he has gone to his account: too soon indeed for us, but not, we believe, for himself. Short as has been his term of office, it has not been without its fruits. The very presence of such a man in such a position is a blessing. His memory does not easily perish in the earth. His example, the example of a pure, just, simple-minded, honest, and kindly nature, survives, and will long survive in the recollection of all who know him.

We speak for ourselves and the public. We bear witness to the public sorrow for the loss of a most amiable prelate, how deep must be their affliction who have lost not a friend merely, or a pastor, but the most affectionate of husbands, the kindest and tenderest of fathers! How many of our readers at this

moment, who remember the consoling influence of Bishop Caulfield's voice and smile in the day of their own affliction, must give a more than passing thought of pity to the bereaved and grieving family whom he has left to mourn a loss which can never be repaired.

The period of Bishop Caulfield's brief episcopate was a quiet period for the Church in the colony, but there were stormy times ahead, and it was a happy thing that Dr. Caulfield's successor, Bishop Venables, was a fighter.

The years 1862 to 1865 were fat years for the finances of the colony. This has happened more than once in its history, but these periods have never yet produced a Joseph to make provision against the lean years which should follow.

CHAPTER V

PROSPERITY AND ADVERSITY

THE Bahamas have never had a permanent trade of any great magnitude. The steadyest industry of the colony has been that of sponging, and in normal times sponge has been the largest export. Something will have to be said later about this industry, which gives employment to the larger part of the male population of Andros, Abaco, Bahama, Berry Islands, and Exuma. For many years the export of pineapples and citrus fruit provided a satisfactory livelihood for the people of Eleuthera and a few of the other islands—that is now entirely a thing of the past. Its place has been taken by the growing and shipment of sisal fibre, for making rope and twine, and tomatoes.

The only satisfactory harbour in the colony approachable from the ocean, with the exception of Georgetown, Exuma, is Nassau ; and, up to the present time, only vessels of comparatively shallow draught have been able to enter Nassau Harbour. There is a stretch of bar between Hog Island and Silver Cay, outside which all larger vessels have to lie ; and in the ‘ Northers,’ which occur with considerable frequency during the winter months,

when the bar 'rages,' it is not possible for any vessel to lie there or to handle cargo. It has been the dream of Nassauvians for generations that the day might come when it would be possible to blast the bar and deepen the harbour, so that larger vessels could come inside and tie up to the wharves. That day has come at last, though the expectations of its results are hardly realized ; but that is another tale.

Commercial prosperity has come to Nassau—like the hurricanes—at rare intervals, quite suddenly, through no efforts of its own, and with tremendous force. The early sixties made one such period of what we may venture to call hurricane prosperity, the years of the nineteen-twenties have made another. The first great boom was followed by a slump and a period of great commercial depression ; it remains to be seen whether a similar experience is to be looked for at the present time. In other respects there is a close parallel between these two periods.

In each case Nassau owed her opportunity simply to her geographical position and the chance which that offered her of fishing in the troubled waters of American politics. In the sixties the opportunity came with the outbreak of the Civil War between North and South ; in the nineteen-twenties it was occasioned by the passing of the ill-starred Prohibition Amendment. In both cases it has consisted of a species of blockade-running, though in the latter only a small part of the sea risks have actually been taken by

Bahamians. In the sixties the blockade to be run was that imposed upon the ports of the Southern States by the Northern navy ; in the nineteen-twenties it is that of the Prohibition enforcement authorities. In each case there has been an element of the illicit which would naturally add a zest of its own to the business for the descendants of the old buccaneers. It could be argued that no British law was violated, yet the sailing has sometimes been pretty near the wind !

The British Government has also in both cases been placed in a difficult position ; for, while the King's representative could scarcely fail to welcome a flood of prosperity and overflowing coffers in the colony which he had been sent to govern, the authorities behind him were anxious to avoid any breach in friendly relations between Great Britain and America.

The irritation caused to the American Government by the activities of Nassau during the Civil War can be well understood. With an effective blockade they could soon have starved out the insurgent states. It was these tiresome little Bahamian schooners running in and out of the Southern ports which prolonged the struggle, bringing in the various supplies needed by the Confederates, and carrying away in exchange cotton to feed the mills of Lancashire.

Officially the British Government had proclaimed the neutrality of all British possessions. Officially the Government of the Bahamas prohibited the export of contraband. But neutrality

had to cut both ways, and Nassauvians might well laugh at the indignation of the American authorities over Governor Bayley's refusal to allow an American vessel to coal in Nassau Harbour.

The risks of blockade running were big, captures were frequent, but profits were big also, and, in spite of official discountenancing, the trade thrived merrily.

With a fine assumption of injured innocence the Bahamas Government protested against the frequenting of their ports by American warships ; this again formed a ground of complaint in more recent years, but the British Government of to-day has taken a less firm attitude in defence of its subjects' undoubted rights than did its predecessors. If Bahamians were infringing the rights of the Northern belligerent, the United States navy was also infringing the rights of the Bahamas ; but in the sixties, as also in the nineteen-twenties, the Bahamas got the best of it.

The volume of trade became enormous. Imports rose from £274,581 in 1861, to £3,368,567 in 1863, and as the bulk of these were for re-export the export figures show a corresponding increase. High-water mark was reached at the end of 1864 when the volume of exports reached the total of £4,672,398, but three months later the bottom was out of the business.

However, in the meantime large fortunes had been made ; landed property had increased in value enormously ; and a great deal of building

had been done in the city. Of course there had been the accompanying rise of prices, and people dependent on small fixed incomes, as is always the case, suffered accordingly. But there was plenty of money in circulation, so that the improved scale of living and standard of comfort which resulted served to make it more difficult for the people to bear the lean years which were to follow.

Governor Bayley, in spite of the official attitude of Downing Street, had frankly upheld the practice of blockade-running and gloried in the prosperity which it had brought to the colony. The Duke of Newcastle, Colonial Secretary, took exception to certain utterances of the Governor on the subject, and this was probably responsible for the replacing of Governor Bayley by Governor Rawson at the beginning of 1865.

Although during the bumper years the debt of the colony was paid off and a surplus accumulated in the Treasury, large increases had been made in the regular expenditures. As soon as the trade of the colony again became restricted to its normal channels, expenditure began once more to overbalance revenue. Moreover, the Colonial Office had taken advantage of the colony's improved financial position to require it in future to provide for the salary of the Governor out of its own funds.

There was a stern need for retrenchment on a large scale if the colony was to balance its budget. To add to the general embarrassment the severest

hurricane within living memory occurred in 1866 and caused a destruction of property which has never been paralleled since until the present year (1926).

By 1868 the Treasury's deficit had become so large as to make it clear that something drastic must be done. At this juncture the minds of many turned to a very heavy item of expenditure in the colonial list which was becoming increasingly unpopular—the provision for the financial support of the two established Churches, the United Church of England and Ireland (as it was then officially designated) and the Presbyterian Kirk of Scotland.

By this time the Wesleyan Methodist Mission was firmly entrenched, not only in Nassau, but also at Harbour Island, and on the islands of Abaco and Eleuthera. Its following among the white people was very considerable. A Baptist Mission also was supplementing the work of the native Baptist preachers among the coloured folk. The fight for religious equality had begun as early as the days of Governor Cockburn in the struggle for equal representation of all religious bodies in the control of education, and the Governor's active partisanship on the side of the Church had served to embitter the struggle.

The Dissenters (as they were then called) not unnaturally resented the fact that they should have to bear a double burden in the support and maintenance of religious institutions, contributing directly for their own ministers and buildings,

and indirectly, through the taxes, for a Church to which they could not conscientiously conform. Yet some measure of recognition was even then accorded to the Dissenting bodies : the provision of financial assistance made by vote of the Legislature to the Wesleyan Methodists for rebuilding their churches after the hurricane of 1866, bears a very fair proportion to that made for the Established Church. They had also been granted rights in regard to the use of the public graveyards.

The colony's necessities in 1868, however, provided a glorious opportunity for the Dissenters to kill two birds with one stone : effect the necessary financial reforms, and dislodge the Established Church from its position of privilege. A measure of disestablishment could be invested with a halo of popularity, by the relief which it would afford to private pockets, which would do much to counter that strong spirit of conservatism which is so deeply engrained in most colonial minds. There was also reason to think that the existence of state paid Churches in the colonies no longer had the sympathy of the Home Government.

Nevertheless, it was quite as a bolt from the blue that the first measure for Church Disestablishment was sprung upon the colony. In March, 1868, without previous warning, a private member of the House of Assembly moved for a select committee to consider a set of resolutions on the subject. The committee was appointed and brought in a Bill which passed the House. It was

promptly rejected by the Council. A constitutional crisis, similar to some of those which had occurred in the stormy days when emancipation was being fought, then followed. The House demanded an appeal to the people through a general election ; the Governor declined to dissolve it. By way of protest, the Speaker resigned, and the House adjourned itself for three months.

When a new election had taken place it was found that the leader of the anti-Church party had lost his seat, but on a petition, in which unfairness at the polls was alleged (probably with some justice) by both sides, the House decided in his favour and he was allowed to occupy the disputed seat. A new Bill ' to amend the ecclesiastical laws of the colony ' was now passed by the House, and again rejected by the Legislative Council. Feeling in the colony ran tremendously high, the old bitterness between Church and Dissent was accentuated tenfold, leaving a legacy which sixty years has hardly wiped out.

The Church party could not hope to ward off the evil day much longer : the best they could do was to mitigate the force of the blow. When the Bill was introduced for the third time in March, 1869, they contented themselves with securing some important amendments in the Council. The Bill, as amended, provided for a transition period ; the Church was only to suffer complete disendowment prospectively, and by a gradual process. This gave the Church a breathing space in which

to rally resources and make provision for the future upon a new basis.

Apart from conservative sentiment no one can deny that the principle of the Bill was an absolutely sound one and its provisions eminently just. Existing interests were carefully conserved. Every state-paid clergyman at the time of the passing of the Bill was to continue to receive the stipend and pension due to him, as provided in a schedule: not until an incumbency became vacant was the colony to cease to be responsible. But all expenditure upon the upkeep of church buildings was in future to be borne by the Church itself. Thus no fresh expenditure upon a religious establishment could be incurred, and the fixed annual expenditure would gradually be reduced as livings fell vacant. The last of the state-paid clergy, Father Fisher of S. Agnes' and Parson Saunders of S. Matthew's, survived well on into the twentieth century.

The Legislature, however, did not at this stage take any steps to enable the disendowed Church to organize itself and regulate its own affairs. That came later, in 1875, in response to a petition from the Church. In the meantime, under the Act of 1869, all Church property which belonged to the State was handed over to a body of Commissioners, consisting of the Bishop, the Rectors of Christ Church, S. Matthew's, and S. John's, Harbour Island, with five laymen, whose places should be filled, as vacancies occurred, by co-option.

The provisions with regard to this body were destined to cause grave difficulties in the future, and finally to culminate in an unhappy and expensive, though completely abortive, lawsuit.

It is obvious that this body of Commissioners was only intended to serve during a transitional period. They were saddled with the responsibility of maintaining the church buildings handed over to them, but no fund was provided for such maintenance, nor any authority vested in them for raising or administering such fund. They were to maintain the buildings for divine service 'according to the rites and ceremonies of the United Churches of England and Ireland.' It was around these words that unhappy controversies were afterwards to rage.

Furthermore, there was no schedule of the actual buildings thus conveyed to the Commissioners annexed to the Act, and, in view of the fact that nearly all the churches are built on land granted by the Crown, or some one else, to the Bishop, it would seem probable that the only church buildings covered by the Act were those of Christ Church, S. Matthew's, and S. John's, Harbour Island.

To review the later history of the Church Commissioners very briefly. The subsequent Act of 1875, which will be dealt with more fully later on, transferred their powers and functions, with a considerable enlargement, to another body to be known as 'The Incorporated Trustees of the Church of England in the Bahamas.' Some

people, however, contended that the two bodies were intended to go on existing side by side, because the Act of 1869 was not explicitly repealed. The reason for that was obvious since its financial provisions still applied, and would long continue to apply, to a number of the clergy.

The Commissioners, however, gradually ceased to function, except spasmodically. Bishop Edward Churton declined to recognize that they had any right to continue to exist. In 1900, when there was a good deal of faction in the diocese, an attempt was made to revive them, and during Bishop Hornby's episcopate they held an annual meeting for the purpose of adjourning until the following year. The present Bishop followed the line of Bishop Churton, and when, in 1922, a legal action was brought to compel the Commissioners to bring the services of the churches supposed to be under their jurisdiction into line with 'the rites and ceremonies of the Church of England' as defined by certain Privy Council judgements, no Commissioners were found to exist; the Bishop and three clergymen cited denied that they were 'Commissioners,' the only surviving layman who had ever acted as a Commissioner resigned just before the suit was brought. Subsequently, through the mediation of the Chief Justice, Sir Sydney Nettleton, the difficulties between both sides, which mainly concerned certain services at the Cathedral, were adjusted, and the lawsuit was dropped.

All this is rather by way of anticipation, but it seemed best to finish with the Commissioners appointed by the Act of 1869 at this point.

The diocese was remarkably fortunate in having so wise and strong a leader as Bishop Venables to pilot it through the difficult waters of those days.

Addington Robert Peel Venables had been consecrated Bishop of Nassau in succession to Bishop Caulfield at the comparatively early age of thirty-six. He had had twelve years' parochial experience, first at Cuddesdon, where he had his title, and then at S. Paul's, Oxford. A very delightful sketch of his life and labours was written after his death by the Rev. W. F. H. King, his commissary.

On one occasion when he was trying to raise some money for building a new school in his parish he was walking with a friend and asked him for a subscription. There was nothing doing. 'Well, then,' said Venables, 'will you bet me ten shillings that I can't jump that hurdle.' 'Done,' said the friend. The hurdle was cleared and ten shillings went into Venables' subscription list.

It was probably his connection with Sir Robert Peel, who had been his guardian, that brought him to the notice of the Duke of Newcastle, who, as Secretary of State for the Colonies, offered him the vacant diocese. He was consecrated at Lambeth by Archbishop Longley on S. Andrew's Day, 1863, the sermon being preached by Dr. Liddon, and arrived at Nassau in the early part

of 1864 just at the time when the colony was at the height of the blockade-running boom.

Bishop Venables was a true son of the Oxford Movement, and his sympathies were all with those who were trying to win back for the Church of England that Catholic heritage which had been so largely lost to sight in the eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries. As would be expected, the Bishop wished to associate with himself in his missionary work men of the same outlook and ideals, though on occasions he could be extremely severe to advanced young men who seemed to him to be paying an undue regard to the externals of worship.

The episcopate of Bishop Venables definitely stamped the 'Catholic' character upon the work of the diocese and began a tradition which has continued unbroken. There was, however, a price to be paid for this. The colonial is generally in matters of religion an unbending conservative. Bishop Venables met with a strong Protestant opposition, and there were times when this opposition made things extremely difficult for him, as it has done for his successors. As the diocese advanced in respect of Catholic teaching and practices, the white inhabitants drifted away from the Church ; but at the same time the externals of Catholic worship made a strong appeal to the descendants of the African race, and the enforcement of Catholic discipline was proved to be most salutary, if not absolutely essential. And so, with Father Fisher at S. Agnes', and Father Wakefield

at S. Mary's, setting the tone of the diocese, the Church riveted itself more and more upon the coloured people.

Christ Church, under Mr. Swann, and S. Matthew's, under Parson Saunders, clung to the old order of early Victorian Church of England worship. It was the leading laymen of these two congregations who most stoutly resisted the Catholic or, as they thought, 'Romeward' tendencies of the Bishop and some of his clergy. Nevertheless it must not be thought for a moment that they were mere factious Protestants of the 'Orange' type. They were most loyal and devoted Churchmen, ready to support their Church generously and work hard for its interests. They strongly resented disestablishment as breaking the tie which bound them to the Mother-Church in England. They wished to perpetuate the tradition of that Church so far as they understood it, and they viewed with great suspicion any departure from customs which they had received. All this has to be borne in mind in considering the controversies which surrounded the re-establishing of the Church of England in the Bahamas as a free and self-governing religious body.

Before we pass on to that we ought to say a few words about the conditions of Church life in the diocese on the arrival of the new Bishop. Of Nassau itself, the capital, we have said enough for the present. Of the out-islands Bishop Venables says after his first visitation: 'I found much both

to dishearten and to encourage us. Dissent has eaten deep into the people in some of the parishes, and the consequence (I hope I am not uncharitable in thinking so) has been a loss of Christian love.'

One of the Bishop's first new ventures was to revive the work of the Church in the parish of S. David's (consisting of Long Cay, Acklins, and Crooked Island). He sent a newly ordained American clergyman, Mr. Ward, to reside at Long Cay, and the progress made in that parish was rapid and remarkable.

Bimini depressed him extremely : lying on the edge of the Gulf Stream it was then the rendezvous of those who made their livelihood from wrecks. He says, 'The inhabitants seem nearly the most degraded people that I have yet visited.' It is a very different story that can be told of Bimini to-day. Wrecking has ceased to be a profitable industry since Trinity House built the lighthouses of Great Isaac and Gun Cay, north and south of Bimini. As Bishop Venables forecasted, the cessation of that means of livelihood has had a beneficial effect upon the character of the inhabitants, and perhaps the influence of the Church has not been altogether in vain.

Andros made the Bishop feel much happier. There was no resident priest there at this time, but a really invaluable work had been carried on for many years by a native catechist, Mr. Sweeting, whom the Bishop subsequently ordained ; he was the first black priest to work in the Bahamas.

The thoroughness of Bishop Venables' visitation work in the out-islands is the more praiseworthy because he had none of that love of the sea so fortunately possessed by his present successor. He was a wretchedly bad sailor, and it is recorded that his cruises pulled him to pieces to such an extent that on landing he could hardly drag himself up to the house. He made it a general rule to visit the whole of the diocese and pretty nearly every station in the diocese in the course of each year. For this purpose he bought a twenty ton schooner built in Halifax which he named *The Message of Peace*.

She has had two successors. The last *Message of Peace*, which had never been a very satisfactory vessel, was sold by the diocese just before my arrival in the colony, and I replaced her by the schooner *Livonia*.

The final end of the old *Message of Peace* was not very glorious. After her sale she came eventually into the hands of some liquor dealers who used her to evade the Prohibition laws and minister to the needs of thirsty American citizens. Unfortunately the local shipping regulations forbade the changing of a name which was peculiarly inappropriate to her new occupation !

But worse was to follow : she was caught by the Federal Authorities, and headlines actually appeared in American papers, ' Bishop of Nassau's yacht *Message of Peace* held for rum-running ' ! And later still I was asked in all seriousness by a distinguished Oxford Professor if it were true

that I was building a new cathedral out of the profits made by my yacht in this profitable business. It will not happen again, though, for she has since been burnt.

However, once more we are anticipating. But the re-establishing of the disendowed Church on a free and self-supporting basis demands a new chapter.

CHAPTER VI

THE CHURCH SELF-GOVERNING

DIRECTLY the Disendowment Bill had been passed, the Bishop paid his first visit to England to rally interest on behalf of the crippled diocese, and, doubtless, to take counsel on the policy to be adopted. His first step, after his return, was to summon a conference of clergy and laity of the diocese in order to consider the draft of a Constitution for the Church. This draft, after considerable discussion, was adopted, with certain amendments, on February 4, 1870.

It declared certain Fundamental Provisions, and created a Diocesan Synod to consist of the Bishop, every licensed *beneficed* clergyman, and a lay representative from each of the existing parishes or chapelries. Most unhappily these Provisions made all judgements of the higher English ecclesiastical courts binding upon the diocese. This was to cause grave difficulties in the near future, and was to have some influence fifty years later. The Bishop himself spoke of it later as a false step ; he had only yielded to the introduction of this proviso to avoid alienating the most important and influential of the laity. These same laymen insisted upon the exclusion of the unbeneficed

clergy. The Bishop, however, gained his point that every action of the Synod must have the consent of a majority of all three orders, which secured him a right of veto upon anything.

The first session of this newly formed Synod was held on January 23, 1871. The Bishop in his charge urged the avoidance of hasty legislation and looked forward to future common action with the other West Indian Dioceses. The Synod accepted the constitution adopted at the meeting of the previous year, and drew up its Standing Orders. It also passed a statute for the election of vestries, the ancient vestries having ceased to exist with the repeal of the old ecclesiastical legislation. The same statute provided for the election by the Synod of a Diocesan Council to act on behalf of the Synod while the Synod was not in session and to administer all funds entrusted to them for general purposes. The Synod issued an instruction to the Diocesan Council to draw up and circulate an Appeal setting forth the needs of the diocese.

The Diocesan Council held its first meeting on the 27th of February, 1871; the Hon. Dr. F. Duncombe was elected Treasurer, and Mr. J. H. Webb, Secretary. The representation of the aristocracy of Nassau in the Church at this time is indicated by the fact that four out of the seven lay members were members of the Legislative Council of the colony.

One of the first acts of the Council was to appoint a committee to draw up an Appeal in

accordance with the Synod's instructions, which was published and circulated a few months later. This Appeal gave a general survey of the difficulties of working this scattered island diocese, and invited subscriptions to a Bishopric Endowment Fund, a Clergy Sustentation Fund, and a General Fund for providing Catechists, Schoolmasters, and 'School-Churches' for the many out-island settlements. At the same time the old Bahamas Church Society (founded by Archdeacon Trew) was invited to wind up its affairs and transfer its assets and its responsibilities to the Diocesan Council.

The Appeal brought a generous grant from S.P.C.K. of £5,000, and a further sum of £5,500 raised by individual effort started the diocese on the way to re-endowment. So far all was plain sailing.

The Synod met for its second session on January 8, 1872, and then the troubles began. A correspondence had taken place during the previous summer between the Bishop and the Hon. B. L. Burnside on the subject of the unfortunate Purchas judgement which had caused so great a stir in English ecclesiastical circles.

The Bishop's letter, dated June 4, 1871, seems worth preserving.

MY DEAR BURNSIDE,

I have been thinking a good deal, as you know, of the course which I should take with regard to the Purchas judgement, and would like to submit to you the conclusions to which I have been led as to the principles by which I ought to be guided.

Although I cannot but distrust Lord Hatherly's law, when in an ecclesiastical case he reverses a decision of Phillimore, and when such an authority as old Sir John Coleridge publicly expresses his dissent; and although I much regret that the Privy Council should now for the first time refuse to the defendant the 'benefit of the doubt,' still I think we must accept the decision until another case reverses it.

But, then, how are we affected by the decision? Directly it affects only Purchas—other clergy only indirectly, by interpreting a rubric by which they are to be guided.

But this rubric, although thus interpreted, is of no more binding obligation than any other rubric, which is sufficiently clear to need no interpretation. The rubric which obliges the clergyman to stand at the north side is not of greater force than that which obliges him to begin his service with the Sentences and 'Dearly Beloved.' I conceive therefore that I must regard all not doubtful rubrics alike.

This then brings me to the question: 'How is the Bishop to deal with rubrics in general?'

It is notorious that rubrics are broken and evaded every day by clergymen of all parties; and sometimes it is expedient that they should not be strictly carried out.

It appears to me that the Bishop, in dealing with a violation of the rubric, should (in case such violation does not seem to him of importance) be guided very much by the feeling of the congregation.

If the general sense of a congregation is against a certain breach of the rubric, the Bishop ought, I think, to see the rubric carried out.

(On this principle, if on no other, I shall myself when officiating in Christ Church observe the rubric as interpreted by the late decision.)

If, on the other hand, a clergyman has his congregation with him, I do not think he ought to be compelled to a strict adherence to every rubric in the Prayer Book.

I believe that non-interference, except on behalf of parishioners, is the course usually adopted by Bishops in England.

If, however, I adopt as my principle 'the rubric and nothing

but the rubric 'and oblige Mr. Wakefield to stand in a particular position, because certain persons who never attend his church insist that the rubric prescribing the 'north side' shall be enforced, I must in fairness enforce not only that rubric but all others also, and then to what difficulties will this bring us? For example :

1. The Litany will have to be said after Morning Prayer and not in the afternoon, as at present.

2. Catechizing after the second Lesson in the Evening Service will be obligatory.

3. Baptisms will have to take place after the second Lesson.

4. It will be necessary to read the *whole* of the Exhortation to the Holy Communion, even though the Sacrament be celebrated every Sunday.

5. During the Communion Service the longer Exhortation, now usually omitted, will have to be read.

Notice how the enforcement of the rubric in these five particulars would lengthen the service.

6. We shall be able to sing no hymns, not even the old or new versions of the Psalms. An anthem will be the only effort of vocal music permitted to us.

7. The giving out of an ordinary notice in church will not be allowable.

8. The words of administration will have to be spoken separately to each communicant.

9. The stole or scarf now worn in the Cathedral will have to be disused, and a cope will have to be worn at the celebration of Holy Communion.

10. At all funerals the body will have to be brought into church.

11. It is doubtful whether even the evening sermon will be retained, there being no provision made for it by the rubric.

These are some of the changes in our mode of conducting the service to which a strict enforcement of the rubric would drive us.

I should be glad if the matter could be allowed to rest until we see how things go in England, for if the judgement remains a dead letter there, judging from the impossibility of enforcing it on so many, the tolerant temper of the time, and the unwilling-

ness of the Bishops to move, it seems likely to become, it would be absurd by enforcing it here to disturb and perhaps break up the Church.

Very truly yours,

ADDINGTON NASSAU.

No record of Mr. Burnside's reply to the Bishop has survived, but one gathers from the files of the *Nassau Guardian*, which contain detailed accounts of the various 'Ritual' cases in England, that 'Ritualism' was being watched with great attention and anxiety in Nassau. And the way that the wind was blowing is indicated by a resolution moved in the Synod of 1872 by the Hon. G. C. Anderson, Attorney-General and afterwards Chief Justice of the colony, seconded by the Hon. E. B. A. Taylor, afterwards Colonial Secretary.

Resolution :

That the Lord Bishop be requested to adopt such means as to his Lordship may seem best, for ascertaining whether any systematical departures from or violations of the Formularies of the Church of England as prescribed by the Book of Common Prayer occur in the Celebration of Divine Service in any of the Churches or Chapels of the Establishment of this Diocese, and if any such should be found to exist, to exert his Episcopal authority to put an end to the same.

This resolution was negatived by the clergy, three voting for it, seven against; but of the laity only one, Mr. W. E. Thomson, voted against it. So the storm flag was hoisted.

In the following month at the Diocesan Council meeting Mr. Anderson gave motion :

Resolved that in the opinion of this Council it is expedient for the peace and well-being of the Church of England in this

colony that the judgements of Her Majesty's Court of Arches for the Province of Canterbury in the case of *Elphinstone v. Purchas*, and the judgement of Her Majesty's Privy Council in the case of *Hebbert v. Purchas*, declaring the wearing of certain vestments in such judgements respectively named and designated by clergymen of the Church of England during the administration of the services of the Church to be illegal should be enforced on the Clergy of this Diocese and this Council as Council of Advice to the Bishop advises and earnestly prays his Lordship to enforce in the particulars aforesaid obedience to such judgements accordingly.

This resolution does not, however, appear from the minutes of the Council ever to have come before the Council for discussion, and for some months there seems to have been a lull in respect of these controversial matters, but the barometer was steadily falling.

We may gather from a newspaper article of 1870 what the condition of things was that was exciting the anxiety of the Protestant laity.

[S. Agnes'] church is of great interest to us all as being the one where Father Fisher, in spite of the severest opposition, has one by one commenced all those improvements in our services which now are introduced into all our churches. Here five or more years ago the Eucharistic lights were used and continued till abandoned, under protest, after adverse decisions of the Privy Council. Here the diocese first became acquainted with choral services, daily prayers, weekly offertories, daily Celebrations, Choral Celebrations, Helmore's Psalter, *Hymns Ancient and Modern*, Eucharistic Vestments, processions and many other things now acknowledged by all to be good.

The writer then goes on to describe S. Mary's, of which building he says :

the plans were prepared with a view to the carrying out of undisguised Catholic ritual.

He describes the Midnight Mass of Christmas celebrated there :

It was a beautiful sight as the procession wound its way round the church, with its massive cross, its banners, and the priest vested in a beautiful chasuble of white, crimson, and gold.

In 1871, a Mission was preached in Nassau by two of the Fathers of the Society of S. John the Evangelist, Cowley, Father Benson and Father O'Neill. During the Mission Father Benson conducted a retreat in the Cathedral, and both priests heard several confessions in the vestry.

Archdeacon Wakefield's diary for the year 1872 throws light upon the temporary cessation of Protestant hostilities.

The Bishop, in order to conciliate the lay opinion of Christ Church and S. Matthew's, asked the clergy for the time being, 'until this tyranny be overpast,' to abandon the use of the Eucharistic vestments. The clergy concerned urged that, if the vestments were conceded, the eastward position at the altar would next be attacked. The Bishop replied, 'I will never ask you to concede that. On that point *I have nailed my colours to the mast.*' On the next day Mr. Wakefield interviewed Mr. Anderson : 'He promised not to molest us on other points or to encourage others to do so if we resigned the vestments. Saw the Bishop and promised to concede them.'¹

A largely-signed memorial of protest was

¹ It appears that the vestments were still, however, worn on the Great Festivals, until they were completely restored on Christmas Day, 1877.

addressed to the Bishop from the congregation of S. Mary's. The Bishop's reply contained the following words :

I most sincerely enter into your feelings at losing an accessory to Divine Worship to which you attach so much importance, but, my friends, are there not other ways of showing our attachment to the doctrine of the Presence in the Holy Eucharist than by the use of the Eucharistic vestments? In the first place, are all who signed the protest communicants? I fear not. Surely, then, the first thing for such persons is to prepare themselves by repentance for that Holy Presence which they profess to venerate. Otherwise zeal for Catholic doctrine will only lead to self-deceit and hide from them their own want of thoroughness with God. And to those who *are* communicants I would say—if you regret so much the symbol of Christ's presence, then make more of the reality. Let that Presence be prepared for with greater earnestness, with more thorough self-examination and humility; let it be approached with increased devotion; let its indwelling within you be guarded from the least approach of sin by a sensitive conscience, and then, if it should please God in His providence to restore the outward symbol, you will value it all the more for having gained without it a deeper appreciation of the inward reality.

At the Synod of 1873 the Bishop, in the course of his charge, mentioned two important matters. One was the inability of the existing Synod to hold property, together with questions which might possibly be raised in the future as to the status of Bishops who would not be consecrated any longer by letters patent from the Crown. Would the law of the colony recognize a bishop elected by a Synod which did not itself possess any legal status? If not, what would happen to the large amount of property held in trust for the Church by the Bishop? The other matter arose

out of a suggestion made by the Archbishop of Canterbury, Dr. Tait, to the Bishop of Guiana, that the West Indian dioceses should unite for joint action now that State support and State control were being removed. In accordance with this the Bishop of Guiana, senior of the West Indian Bishops, had invited Bishop Venables, accompanied if possible by a clerical and lay delegate from Nassau, to attend a conference at Demerara.

The session of the Synod this year was entirely free from any controversial element.

At the conference of West Indian Bishops at Demerara in November a very important step was taken towards federating the West Indian dioceses into a province. A resolution was passed affirming the desirability of a Provincial Synod of Bishops and inviting the several dioceses to adopt this recommendation.

Resolutions were also passed with regard to the constitutions of Diocesan Synods, among them the following :

It is desirable, if possible, to procure Acts from the local Legislature enabling such Synods or Church Councils to frame any rules or regulations that shall not be inconsistent with the laws of the colony.

Bishop Venables in his charge to the Synod of 1874 gave a *résumé* of the proceedings of the Conference. The charge included the following passage :

Hitherto I have not been anxious to obtain for our Synod the recognition of the Legislature, because I have wished that we

should proceed leisurely and look around us before we took such an important step ; but the recent acquisition of property by the diocese which the Synod is unable to hold as trustee renders it necessary that we should delay no longer ; but should forthwith take measures to obtain for the diocese a legally constituted body to manage its affairs.

Moreover, the present time appears to be well suited for making the proposed change, as the West Indian Bishops at their late meeting have sketched out the constitution which they recommend the Diocesan Synods to adopt, and which probably will be adopted as far as possible throughout the West Indies ; and therefore if it is thought advisable to create another Synod for this diocese, we shall have before us a plan to guide us in framing its organization.

The Synod immediately realized the crux that lay in the phrase '*to create another Synod for this diocese.*' The lay members were well content with the existing Synod ; although they had had to yield the Bishop's right of veto, they had secured Fundamental Provisions which bound them by the decision of English courts in matters of ecclesiastical law. They did not want to lose that bulwark of protection against the ' ritualism ' which they dreaded, and with which they now suspected the Bishop to be in full sympathy. They had also managed to secure an overwhelming preponderance of lay votes by the exclusion of the unbeneficed clergy. The advantages won by them might be jeopardized in a new constitution, and they knew well enough that these were the very points which the Bishop would never suffer to be incorporated permanently in a legal constitution.

A select Committee of the Synod was appointed

to consider and report on this section of the Bishop's address. The Synod exercised its right of enlarging this Committee by an addition of two more lay members. The Committee agreed in the desirability of legislative recognition for the Synod, but pressed for the existing constitution of the Synod as the basis of such legislation ; they further declined at present to take into consideration the formation of a Provincial Synod, although they did not wish the diocese precluded from future action in the matter.

This was the very course to which the Bishop was most strongly opposed.

The Committee had also included a draft Address to the Governor, and a draft Bill for the Legislature. In the motion for its consideration by the whole Synod in committee the margin was the narrowest possible : it was carried by a considerable majority of lay votes, as was to be expected ; only eight clergy were present ; of these four voted for it, four against ; there not being a majority of both orders the motion was therefore lost.

There the matter rested—or seemed to rest—until the next session of the Synod ; but an extraordinary spirit of bitterness and ill-will had been engendered. The proceedings of the Diocesan Council during the ensuing year show the lengths to which it carried people.

At a special meeting of the Council a few days after the close of the session, the Rev. R. Swann expressed the dissatisfaction that was felt by

several members of the Synod and Council at the unsatisfactory mode in which the question of legislative recognition of the Synod introduced by the Lord Bishop in his address at the opening of the session had been dealt with, and suggested the importance of summoning a special meeting of the Synod in order to reconsider the question. This the Bishop declined to do, and the opposition retaliated by a resolution moved by Mr. Anderson and seconded by Dr. Duncombe, which was passed in the April meeting to this effect :

Resolved that in the present state of uncertainty as to the legal status and powers of the Diocesan Synod it is inexpedient that this Council should enter on the consideration of any subject relating to general diocesan government or management, and especially that the Council should not (*sic*) give its sanction to any scheme or proposition for the raising or expenditure of money for diocesan purposes.

For this resolution two clerical and four lay members voted, the only lay member voting on the other side with Father Fisher and Father Wakefield being Mr. J. H. Webb.

The responsibility of providing for the salaries of catechists and other items of Church expenditure was now thrown upon the Bishop. (A similar line of action was adopted in 1921 by the vestry of Christ Church : it proved equally abortive.) The Bishop accepted the responsibility, and instructed Father Wakefield, who happened to be also Secretary of the Council, to write to the out-island catechists informing them of the situation, and urging them to do their best to raise

funds in their respective stations which he (the Bishop) would supplement according to his means.

The Bishop appointed Mr. J. H. Webb to act as his Treasurer in this matter. This gave rise to a most unhappy incident. Mr. Sweeting, the deacon-in-charge of Andros, sending a remittance to Dr. Duncombe, Treasurer of the Council, stated that he had also remitted £5. 7s. 1d. to Mr. Webb for diocesan purposes. Dr. Duncombe addressed a letter to Father Wakefield claiming that this sum should have been paid to the Council (in spite of the fact that the Council's own resolution precluded them from receiving it !)

Sir G. C. Anderson, in reference to the above action of the Lord Bishop, made the monstrous suggestion that his Lordship 'had misappropriated moneys which were the property of the Diocesan Council.' Bishop Venables was wounded to the quick : he at once handed Dr. Duncombe an order on Mr. Webb for the amount received from Andros, resigned the chair, and left the hall. The Council seems at least to have been sufficiently ashamed of itself to order the paragraphs containing the above to be struck out of the minutes at its next meeting, two months later.

By the time the Synod met again in 1875 the Bishop had completed his draft of an Enabling Bill for the diocese to be submitted to the Legislature.

An extremely apposite sermon was preached

at the opening of Synod on the work and difficulties of Nehemiah by the Rev. J. Hartmann Fisher.

The Bishop's address was brief and to the point ; he explained that in the Bill which he had drafted he had gone upon the principle of asking from the Legislature nothing beyond what the Church actually required — namely, power to manage its own affairs and to hold property. He was willing, if it were desired, to insert a clause making the present ecclesiastical law of the Church of England in the Bahamas binding on all its members, subject to any modifications which might be made in the future according to the constitution of the said Church.

The Synod would appear to have met again in a chastened mood, or maybe the opposition had decided to transfer their criticisms of the Bishop's scheme from the Synod Hall either to the floor of the House of Assembly or the Council Chamber. At any rate, the draft passed the Synod with only verbal amendments, and petitions for legislation on these lines were sent up to Governor Robinson, the Legislative Council, and the House of Assembly.

The Bill as sent up from the Synod passed the House of Assembly with no significant alterations beyond the fact that the title ' Church Commissioners ' was changed to ' Incorporated Trustees,' a detail which was to be responsible for ambiguity and trouble in the future. It was in the Council Chamber that the attempt was made to spike the

Bishop's guns ; and then help came from a most astonishing quarter. No one had been a more resolute opponent of the Church and its ' Ritualistic ' tendencies than the Rev. Robert Dunlop, Presbyterian minister of S. Andrew's Kirk, and yet he was destined to save the Church of England in the Bahamas from an Erastian state-control against which his Scottish soul rose in revolt.

An amendment provided that ;

The ecclesiastical law governing the Church of England, and the articles, doctrines, rites, rules, discipline, and ordinances of the said Church, as such law, articles, doctrines, rites, rules, discipline, and ordinances shall from time to time be in force in England, shall be binding on the members for the time being of the Church of England in the Bahamas.

With great weight and cogency of argument Mr. Dunlop proceeded to inveigh against this *re-establishment* of the disendowed Church of England in the Bahamas as a creature of the State. Its Synod, which it was the aim of the Bishop to legalize, would become a sham and nullity. Was the object to kill ritualism ? This was not the right way. The place to oppose ritualism was not in the Legislature but on the floor of the Synod. The State had disestablished and disendowed the Church ; for it to attempt now to lay down the lines on which the Church should regulate her own affairs was a violation of the principle on which the State had acted.

The result of Mr. Dunlop's weighty criticism was that at the next meeting of the Legislative Council the offensive clause was struck out. And

thus the Church of England in the Bahamas gained her present constitution.

At the prorogation of the Legislature on May 1st Governor Robinson said in the course of his speech :

This session, gentlemen, will be remarkable in the history of the Bahamas for the ecclesiastical measures passed by the Legislature.

These matters have been dealt with in a most impartial spirit, and I see no reason why the religious atmosphere of the colony need ever again be disturbed.

I trust that the Churches which now enjoy the privilege of self-government will only compete together in good works, and that the ministers of all denominations, with that zeal and earnestness for which they are so distinguished, will only strive to emulate each other in spreading the pure and simple Gospel of Christ throughout the poor districts of these scattered islands.

Yet the fight with the Protestant opposition was by no means over : it was transferred back again from the Legislature to the floors of the Synod Hall.

The situation was perfectly clear : the Church was now a free, self-governing body restricted by none of the provisional legislation passed by the old illegal or rather ' pre-legal ' Synod. The Synod legalized by the Legislature must start its work *de novo*.

The Bishop began his address to the clergy and newly elected lay representatives with these words :

The first thing we shall have to consider will be what part of the legislation of the old Synod we shall reaffirm, what we shall amend, and what supplementary enactments we shall add thereto.

On the following day he submitted to the Synod a draft embodying a 'Declaration of Principles.' This Declaration was considered in committee of the whole Synod and reported unamended. Then came a notice of motion by the Hon. W. E. Armbrister that at its next reading he would move the following additions :

1. *Resolved*, that no sanction be given to the introduction or use of forms, practices, or ceremonies in the service of the churches or chapels of the diocese, which have been or may hereafter be prohibited in England by the judgement of any Court or Courts having jurisdiction in England in ecclesiastical causes.

2. *Resolved*, that all judgements of the Arches Court of the Province of Canterbury, so far as the same may not be overruled or varied by any higher Court having appellate jurisdiction in England in ecclesiastical causes, and all judgements of any such higher Court of Appeal whereby the Doctrine and Formularies of the Church of England may be defined or explained, shall be binding on the said Synod and the Clergy and Laity of the Church of England in this diocese.

This amendment does not seem actually to have been put, but when the Bishop's Declaration was put to the Synod on the motion of the Rev. H. Philpot it failed to win a majority of both orders. Only one of the clergy, Mr. Swann, voted against it, but the laity divided five for and six against. So the diocese was left without a Declaration of Principles until the year 1882 when the present Declaration was submitted to the Synod by Bishop Cramer-Roberts and passed without opposition.

But Bishop Venables had done his work : the

diocese had retraced its false step and was free of the judicial decisions of English Courts whose spiritual character and authority were denied by an increasing number of English Churchmen.

Canons for regulating the Church's affairs were passed, the last of which provided for the appointment of a Bishop. Few guessed how soon it would be needed. Immediately after the Synod's last meeting the Bishop collapsed. He was taken to America for change of air, but he gradually sank and passed away at Hartford, Connecticut, on October 8th.

If ever a Confessor-Bishop earned canonization at the hands of a Church it was Addington Venables.

CHAPTER VII

CLOSING YEARS OF THE NINETEENTH CENTURY

THE episcopate of Bishop Cramer-Roberts, who succeeded Bishop Venables, was a period of quiet consolidation ; old controversies had died down and the new Bishop was able to go on steadily building up the work of the Church in the islands. The house above Shirley Street where Bishop Venables had lived was purchased by the Diocesan Council for a very small sum as a residence for the Bishop and given the name of Addington House, although to this day it is more popularly known as 'Bishop Hill.' The four Nassau parishes, served by clergy who were still in receipt of stipends from the Colonial Government, gradually accumulated funds for their future endowment. By the canons of the diocese every registered member of the Church was required to pay the sum of 4*s.* per annum (since increased to 9*s.*) towards the stipend fund either of his parish or of the diocese. Registration was always allowed for those who pleaded poverty as an excuse for not paying this amount, but no one who was not registered was allowed any claim upon the ministrations of the clergy or any voice in the

Church's affairs. Some old people in the diocese still call these Church dues 'disendowment' money.

The canons also provided for the management of the affairs of each parish by a duly elected vestry, but to-day hardly any vestries exist except in parishes which are self-supporting, and it is only in self-supporting parishes that the vestries have the right of nominating an incumbent for appointment by the Bishop. Perhaps the most important accession to the strength of the diocese during the reign of Bishop Cramer-Roberts was that of the Rev. F. B. Matthews, one of the ablest missionaries the Bahamas ever possessed.

Unhappily severe domestic trials compelled the Bishop to resign in 1885. The Archbishop of Canterbury, however, to whom the choice of a new Bishop had been delegated, made a singularly wise selection in the appointment of the Rev. Edward Townson Churton, then Vicar of S. Bartholomew's, Dover.

Dr. Churton was an Oriel man and an old Etonian. Himself a fine scholar, he came of a distinguished family. His nephew, the present Dean of S. Paul's, has given a summary of that family's achievements in his second series of *Outspoken Essays*. He was a tall and striking-looking man in the prime of life. He is usually spoken of in the diocese to-day as 'Bishop Edward' or 'the Lord Edward' to distinguish him from his brother, Henry Churton, who succeeded him. The fact of his association, as a curate at

S. Mary Magdalene's, Paddington, with Dr. West and the Rev. W. H. Cleaver was sufficient to indicate his strong sympathy with the principles of the Catholic Revival.

Edward Churton was consecrated at Lambeth Palace on S. Matthew's Day, 1886, the sermon being preached by Mr. Cleaver. He at once set himself to lay the foundations of a 'Nassau Association for Prayer and Work' in England, under the direction of his brother, the Rev. H. N. Churton, priest-in-charge of a parish in South Devon. One of the first outcomes of this Association was the *Nassau Quarterly Paper*, containing all the news of the diocese, now just completing the fortieth year of its existence.

The Bishop's journey to his diocese was marked by a harrowing experience : the *Oregon*, in which he was sailing, was wrecked within a day's journey of New York. Happily there were no lives lost—but by an unfortunate mischance the rumour reached Nassau that everybody had been saved except the Bishop. However, within a few hours of this false report the Bishop himself arrived in the flesh, though destitute of almost everything except the clothes that he was wearing.

Bishop Edward found only twelve priests in the diocese, and one of these, Mr. Crispin, Rector of S. Patrick's, Eleuthera, died very soon after the Bishop's arrival.

The Bishop felt very strongly, as his present successor feels, that except in the case of Bahamians the missionary work of the out-islands must

be done by unmarried clergymen. The financial resources of the diocese since disestablishment have never been sufficient to provide a man with a stipend adequate to the support of a family. Not only are the conditions of out-island life extremely trying to an Englishwoman, but it is most undesirable that English children should be brought up in an environment where they may have no children of their own race with whom to associate, and far away from opportunities of education. The Bishop found himself unable to keep absolutely to his rule, but the line of policy laid down by him is what the diocese has usually tried to follow. At the present time there are only two married priests in out-island parishes. One of them is a native Bahamian to whom the disadvantages outlined above do not apply : the other has no family.

On the other hand, the Bishop fully realized one of the greatest trials which the young man just out from England has to endure in an island mission station—the trial of loneliness. It seemed to him that the ideal arrangement was to send young men out, like the Apostles of old, ‘ two and two ’ ; he thought that £200 a year between them should be sufficient for two men with simple needs keeping house together.

Such a plan, even though to-day the cost of living in the Bahamas on the simplest scale would be at least double the Bishop’s estimate, seems good on paper, but in actual practice it would generally prove abortive. In a large parish like

Eleuthera, or Cat Island, or Long Island, or Andros, or in a parish consisting of several different islands, the two priests would hardly ever be together. With so many church stations to serve they would almost always be at opposite ends of the parish, then, sooner or later, a separate headquarters would be established from which to work the district farthest away from the head station ; each priest would assume responsibilities for one district, and from that it would only be a short step to division into two parishes, and the original plan would have fallen through completely. This is, I think, what has happened in every case where Bishop Edward's plan has been tried for any length of time.

The Bishop tried it first in the case of two students from Dorchester, Mr. J. R. Vincent and Mr. C. W. Smith, whom he sent as deacons to the parish of S. Patrick's, Eleuthera.

It will be well at this point to take a rapid survey of the out-island parishes at the beginning of 1887.

S. John's, Harbour Island, with its out-stations in the northern part of Eleuthera, was vacant, through the resignation of the Rev. W. H. Strombom.

S. Paul's, Long Island, at present had no priest to build on the foundations so splendidly laid by Father Crowther.

Two of Bishop Venables' stalwarts were still carrying on—the Rev. W. W. Duncombe, at

S. David's, Long Cay, which included in its parish the whole of Acklins and Crooked Island, and the Rev. H. Philpot, the 'Apostle' of Abaco. Together with Abaco, Father Philpot had the charge of the whole of Grand Bahama, as well as Bimini and the Berry Islands, covering an area of some 4,000 square miles—a really stupendous responsibility.

At Inagua was the Rev. W. L. Glanville, whose family are still resident in Nassau, and who was able to do the work of a medical missionary in that distant outpost.

The Rev. F. B. Matthews, to whom reference has already been made, was in charge of Cat Island.

Andros at this time was under the care of a priest of the African race, the Rev. M. J. Cooper, who afterwards became Rector of Watlings.

To Watlings, on his ordination to the priesthood, the Bishop sent the Rev. F. d'Ynza Brace, a member of a well-known Nassau family, who had had his training under Mr. Swann at the Cathedral.

No successor had at that time been found to Mr. Page at S. Andrew's, Exuma, but the Turks Island parishes were provided for by the ordination of the Rev. H. F. Crofton, who had come out with the Bishop as a deacon.

The reign of Bishop Edward Churton was the beginning of what might be called the 'sub-apostolic' period of the Diocese of Nassau ; there

are four names which stand out pre-eminently for long and notable service through this period, they are the names of Smith, Browne, Weigall, and Webb. All four of these priests are still alive, and the last is still working in the diocese after thirty-three years in one out-island parish.

There is one other most important name among the recruits whom Bishop Edward attracted to Nassau, the Rev. William Lowndes, who perhaps stamped a deeper mark upon the history of the diocese during his tenure of the Rectorship of S. Mary's than any one else. But this is anticipating: we have not yet finished with the heroes of the 'Apostolic' age, and among them no one deserves notice more than the Rev. C. C. Wakefield, Mr. Lowndes' predecessor at S. Mary's.

No one can look through the Diocesan Registry without marvelling at the amazing thoroughness of Mr. Wakefield's work: everything, in his day, so orderly; books of reference so carefully posted in his beautiful handwriting; legal documents and important correspondences accurately docketed. With all his work as Rector of S. Mary's, Diocesan Treasurer, and Registrar, he managed to combine the mastership of the Grammar School and also the management of a small Diocesan Book Store. In 1889, the Grammar School then being under the charge of the Rev. Audley Browne, the Bishop appointed him Archdeacon of the Bahamas. In spite of all his other work he had managed to find time to pay

frequent visits to the out-island parishes, and there was no one who had such a thorough knowledge of the whole diocese. There was also no one who, to the end of his life, retained a deeper devotion to the diocese. Even after he had left the Bahamas for work in an English parish he lived chiefly for Nassau. As editor of the *Nassau Quarterly*, until failing eyesight compelled him to give it up, and as Bishop's Commissary until his death in 1920, his work for the diocese never flagged.

The same year, 1889, in which Mr. Wakefield was appointed to the office of Archdeacon marked the bestowal upon Mr. Swann, the venerated Rector of Christ Church, of the title of Dean. As a matter of fact Mr. Swann was on furlough in England at the time and did not return to the diocese. The title was held by his successor, the Rev. Philip Young, after which it lapsed until the creation of a Dean and Chapter by canon in the Synod of 1920.

The development of 'ritualism' in some of the other churches widened the existing gap between the congregation of Christ Church and the rest of the diocese. A curious incident took place after the first occasion on which Bishop Edward wore a cope in the Cathedral at an Ordination service. The newly ordained clergyman happened to be in temporary charge of the Cathedral; as such, on the following day, he was compelled on behalf of the vestry to address a remonstrance to his Bishop for the introduction of anything so

THE BISHOP OF THE BAHAMAS

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1911-1912

'ritualistic' into the Cathedral ! That historic cope was left by Bishop Edward to the Rev. Audley Browne, and is now in the possession of the present Bishop.

But, the feeling of the Christ Church vestry being as it was, the Bishop felt that they ought not to be in the position of being able to nominate a Dean whose sympathies would be alien from the rest of the diocese. The present canon provides for the office of Dean being held either by the Bishop or by the Rector of Christ Church, if appointed by the Bishop ; if the Bishop is Dean, the Rector of Christ Church holds the senior canonry with the office of Sub-Dean.

One of Bishop Edward's earliest pieces of work was the establishment of a High School for Girls under the charge of Miss Brodrick. The establishment was housed in a building bought by Bishop Venables and known as the Church House. The school was taken over in later years by Sisters of the Community of S. Peter's, Horbury, and bears the name of S. Hilda's. Miss Brodrick's memory is still green among her old pupils in Nassau, and there is an old coloured lady named Ellen Gater, formerly her maid, who still wears dresses which, if they did not actually belong to Miss Brodrick, faithfully reproduce Miss Brodrick's style.

Another institution founded by Bishop Edward was the Clergy House, where it was thought that out-island clergy might board when visiting Nassau. In this building the master of the Gram-

mar School resided and the Diocesan Library (rich in the Caroline Divines) was housed. As a Clergy House it never worked very well. When the question arose of rebuilding it after a disastrous fire, it was found more expedient to let it. The property, just to the north of the Church Hall, appreciated very much in value and has recently been sold ; so Bishop Edward's speculation, even though it failed of its purpose, is proving of considerable benefit to the diocese at a time when the financial strain is very heavy.

With all the active work of his new diocese upon his shoulders the Bishop was able to find a considerable amount of time for study and also for writing. Within a year from his consecration he was at work upon a book, *The Island Missionary of the Bahamas*. One would like to give a summary of this work ; but, as this is not a biography of Edward Churton, one must content oneself with stating that it contained a series of practical addresses and notes intended chiefly for ordinands.

The Bishop's brother, Henry Churton, had been spending a good deal of time in the diocese after the Bishop's first visit to England. He was passionately devoted to the sea and no weather was ever too rough for him. After the Bishop lost his wife in 1890, being himself a widower, he decided to join him permanently at Addington House. Like his brother, he was a tall spare man ; he was an even more distinguished scholar ; and also a cricketer of no mean capacity. Bishop

Edward was reputed 'High Church,' but Henry was much 'Higher'; shy and reserved, he inspired deep affection, and besides being a most capable man of business he possessed great reserves of spiritual power. The more 'advanced' clergy of the diocese always felt that in him they had a friend at court. For the Bishop, although a very definite Catholic in his beliefs and sympathies, was rather impatient of those clergy who seemed inclined to force the pace too fast, especially after the coming of Lowndes to the diocese.

Great and good man as he was, there were times when Bishop Edward's temper was a little irritable; he had much to try it besides the climate and continual ill health. It is on record that on one occasion at Governor's Harbour, as a counterblast to what he deemed the excessive pageantry of a parish procession in which more than one priest was arrayed in a cope, he declined himself to walk round in anything more than a 'sausage-skin' surplice. But his annoyance on another occasion in a parish procession at S. Mary's can be better understood. Holding the views which he was known to hold on the Invocation of the Saints, it was a little too much, on asking for a copy of the words being sung, to find himself taking part in the Litany of Loretto! It cannot be denied that Lowndes did force the pace rather fast—but of that later.

By 1890 the Bishop had increased the number of clergy working in the diocese to twenty. Two

of the three devoted priests afterwards to be known as 'the Triumvirate' have already appeared on the scene, Charles Smith and Audley Browne. The third, Harold Weigall—a name dear to every one in the Bahamas, came as Bishop's chaplain in the first month of the following year. No one probably has ever thrown himself more heart and soul into the life of the coloured people from the day of his arrival in the diocese than he. With his marvellous memory for faces, and his quickness of adapting himself to Bahamian ways of speech, he endeared himself to them at once, and Bishop Edward saw that he was the right man to put in charge of a piece of work which he had long wished to establish, a special mission for seamen, and particularly spongers.

When spongers come from a trip they do not bring their Sunday clothes, and nothing would shock them more than the idea of appearing in one of the town churches except in their Sunday best. As a result Sunday in Nassau was usually spent by them in idleness, and probably vice. It was to meet this need that a special Seamen's Mission was designed; besides its own little chapel, S. Cuthbert's, it had its clubroom where they could while away idle hours, and many who professed no other religious affiliation were glad to call themselves 'Father Weigall's members.'

The chief wealth of the Bahamas is not in the land but in the water. The sea provides the Bahamian with the fish that forms one of his principal articles of diet. From the sea come the turtles,

which afford in their meat a substantial and palatable supply, and in their shell a valuable article for export. There are also the conchs, which offer, not only edible meat and saleable shell, but also the lottery chance of a pink pearl now and again. Occasionally, too, will come the find of that nasty, but extremely valuable, commodity known as ambergris, used in the manufacture of some of the most precious scents. Besides all these there is an exceedingly repulsive kind of sea-slug bearing the name of *beche-de-mer*, highly prized and greatly sought after for cooking purposes by Chinese. But by far the largest export from the Bahamas is sponge, and on some of the islands the sponging industry employs almost the whole of the male population.

West of the island of Andros, stretching away towards the Gulf Stream, is a great bank of soft white marl popularly known as 'the Mud.' This is the happy hunting-ground of the sponger. But it is not the only scene of his activities ; there are other areas of the Great Bahama Bank, in the neighbourhood of Eleuthera and also of Long Island, where sponges grow. Good sponge is also obtained on the Little Bahama Bank to the south of Abaco. The Bight of Acklins has in times past rendered its regular quota of sponge, and sponging is carried on over parts of the Caicos Bank.

The large island of Andros is almost entirely devoted to sponging, and its men are hardly qualified for anything else ; the same is true of

the Berry Islands ; sponging gives occupation to a considerable proportion of the population from Grand Bahama, Abaco, Exuma, and neighbouring cays, while most of the other islands have one or two sponging vessels.

The vessel used for sponging must be of shallow draught, and the type usually preferred is either a small schooner of between twenty and thirty tons or a large sloop with a shoulder-of-mutton sail. Each of the vessels will carry, or tow behind her, a number of small dinghies. If a vessel has as many as ten boats her full complement of crew will be twenty-one, the cook to mind the vessel and two men or boys to each boat. Quarters aboard are uncomfortably crowded, to say the least of it, men and boys sleeping ' head and tail,' like sardines in a tin. When the vessel is anchored on the sponging-ground the men go out at daybreak in the boats ; one in the stern of each, sculling ; the other, crouching in the bows, exploring the depths with a glass-bottomed bucket, sponge hook ready to his hand. At sunset the boats come in to their vessel with the fruits of their labour to be piled in the hold, and what a slimy, stinking harvest it is ! For the sponge when hooked from the bottom is really a live thing, black and muddy ; the processes of death and decomposition are never, in any organism, very soothing to the olfactory organs. It is said that the smell of decaying sponge is very healthy ; it may be so, but it is certainly a taste which would take a great deal of acquiring.

Occasionally it has happened that an unscrupulous scoundrel of a cook, after seeing his crew off, will cram sail on the vessel and carry her away to sell in Cuba or elsewhere ; then at sunset, when the boats come in, there is woe and tribulation. But these cases are very rare.

There are one or two little cays and other places on the western side of Andros where the sponging vessels have their ' ranches ' ; to these they come in with their load of sponge at the end of each week, and there the week-end is spent. All along the shore at each ranch stretches a series of ' kralls,' small palisaded enclosures built out in the water where the sponges are left to soak. A watchman remains in charge of each ranch during the week. Any Saturday that you may visit ' the Mud ' you will find all these kralls humming with naked boys who are washing and beating the sponges, and then flinging the clean ones into a pile on the bank to dry and bleach in the sun.

Sunday is usually spent as a day of rest, enlivened by endless singing of hymns and the famous negro spirituals popularly known in the Bahamas as ' antems.' The negro has a natural sense of harmony ; he is also extremely fond of singing falsetto ; many of them whose chest-registers are rough and coarse possess head notes of a quality that would be envied by Westminster Glee Singers. Their ' antems ' are truly mediaeval in their delicious farsing of sacred themes with topical allusions. The melodies are traditional

and the rhythm syncopated ; the subjects are most frequently drawn from apocalyptic ideas with copious Old Testament references. The boys amuse themselves with the continual inventing of new rhymes.

A very favourite anthem begins :

John saw :—John saw :—

John saw de holy angel sittin' on de golden altar.

It will be taken up with a chorus such as :

John saw

Esau

I saw

You saw

Dey saw

City of Nassau.

Another favourite has the refrain :

I believe in de good ole Bible
From de beginning to de end.

One verse of that has a reference to :

How de whale swallow Jonah
Swallow him head and tail.

A variant of this describes the reading of its various chapters in some such style as this :

De Bishop go to read out of chapter three
Of how our Blessed Saviour walked in Galilee.
De Bishop go to read out of chapter four
Of how our Blessed Saviour preached to the poor.

and so on.

There is one which is certainly, in its descrip-

tion of the Judgement, reminiscent of some long discredited theories of the Atonement.

I see ole Satan stand
With his Bible under his arm.
' Deal fair, Almighty God.
Don't cheat yourself, and don't cheat me,
Half them people is mine ! '

There is always an element of pathos in this negro music, and sometimes sung on the deck of a schooner under the stars on a Sunday night it is quite indescribably beautiful.

The sponging vessels are usually fitted out directly the hurricane months are over and make their way to the sponging-ground early in October. Usually they have collected enough sponge to complete their trip and bring it in to Nassau to their outfitter before Christmas. The sponge is then sold in the sponge exchange and the proceeds divided between outfitter, owners, and crew. The buying of sponge to-day is mostly in the hands of Greeks who have settled in Nassau for that purpose. Before the sponge can be made up in the bales and shipped, the clipping of it in the sponge-yards provides employment for a considerable number of women ; sitting and smoking their old clay pipes, these ladies accompany the click of the shears with a ceaseless flow of melody.

A good trip will sometimes put quite a considerable sum of money into a sponger's pocket, but, as is usual with seafaring folk, it doesn't often remain there very long. Nearly every sponger is a gambler, and the temptations of

Nassau are certainly not less than those of other seaport towns.

The Bahamian negro is by no means immoral or vicious, but his natural passions are strong and he has no long tradition making for self-control behind him. Bar-rooms are many, liquor flows in abundance, women are easy. After many weeks at sea in a life of enforced abstinence and celibacy, he will be only too likely to have his fling as soon as opportunity offers. One result of this is to be seen in the sad amount of venereal disease prevalent in the colony. It is estimated that ninety per cent. of the cases in the hospital are attributable, either directly or indirectly, to this.

At the other end, too, there are grave moral difficulties ; lapses from virtue among the women are only too common when their husbands are away for any length of time ; sad cases have been known of married women seducing quite young boys.

But it is not always the case that the end of a trip fills the spongers' pockets with money. Sometimes bad weather may cause a vessel to make a ' broken trip ' ; strong north-west winds will stir the mud and foul the water on the bank in such a way as to make the sponges invisible ; then, when stores are exhausted, back the vessel must go to Nassau with barely half the quota of sponge that would make the trip pay ; the men have had all their share in advance in the form of food supplies for their families and the stores actually on

the vessel ; whatever the sponge does fetch must go to the outfitter, and often there is a balance of debt due to him at the end ; nothing then but to sign articles again and to go off on another trip !

If a good trip often helps to fill the hospital, a bad trip generally helps to fill the gaol. The sponger has not much sense of the sacredness of contract ; sometimes a boy having signed his articles, and taken his advance, will slip away and hide till his vessel has sailed ; sometimes he will sign on with more than one vessel, taking an advance from each and sailing on neither. Nassau prison is not an uncomfortable place, and very little stigma attaches to a short residence there, especially for a sponger.

But the anxieties of a sponging-captain in getting his crew rounded up and keeping them all aboard to the moment of tripping are no light matter. Even the Bishop has to experience similar difficulties occasionally ; there is generally one member of the crew who has ' had to go and fetch his clothes from over the hill,' or ' to go and see a sick sister.' Then a search party has to be dispatched ; sometimes the defaulter is brought back, sometimes he is not.

It is a common thing among those who write from a superficial knowledge of the sponging business, like the author of *The Land of the Pink Pearl*, to represent the Nassau merchant, whose business is the outfitting of sponging vessels, as a blood-sucker, who exploits the wretched sponger, keeping him in a condition of perpetual peon-

age. This is a grossly unfair picture. Granted that the system of 'advances' is a thoroughly bad one, it exists not by the will of the outfitter but by that of the sponger ; his wife and family have got to live while he is away at sea. The better class of owners and outfitters are always trying to persuade their men to accept smaller advances before they go to sea ; it is not in the least their policy to try deliberately to keep them enslaved by debt. On the contrary, in the case of captains of boats partly paid for, they are encouraging them to become independent owners.

Again, even if the prices they charge for the stores are high, there are always risks and losses to be covered. As a matter of fact, so far from the Bahamian spongers writhing under the tyranny and oppression of their Nassau agents, the relations between them are generally of a most friendly nature. If one partner in the sponging business seems to be making much more out of it than the others, the determining factor is usually something which has nothing to do with the system, viz. personal character.

It seems well to close this chapter with a final word on the regular industries of the colony. Eleuthera is marked on the map as the principal fruit-growing island. At one time the export of pineapples brought in a considerable revenue, but to-day, alas, the good red soil which runs in veins through parts of Eleuthera seems to be worked out ; the Bahamian pineapple can no

longer compete in the market with the Hawaiian; the canning factories have been closed down; and, although pineapples are still grown for home consumption, the pineapple industry is dead. Even within the last few years some of the settlements in northern Eleuthera were golden with oranges, lemons, and grape-fruit; but the same plague has afflicted them which devastated the trees of New Providence, the blue-grey fly. This pest has spread from one island to another of the Bahamas group, blackening the leaves, shrivelling the fruit, and finally killing the trees, until now there is not enough citrus fruit grown in the colony even to supply the Nassau market.

The place of these industries has to some extent been taken by the growing of early tomatoes for the New York market. Tomato growing, however, is a speculative undertaking, depending entirely for its success upon the right amount of rain coming at the right times.

What has really been the chief mainstay of most of the islands is the growing of sisal-fibre. This industry was introduced by Governor Sir Ambrose Shea in 1889. The rocky Bahamian soil is better adaptable to this than to most things, and sisal is easy to work. Women can cut the long spiky leaves of the plant, 'tote' them in bundles either to the shore or to some pond where they can soak; when they have soaked sufficiently the fibre is stripped from the pulp and hung up to dry until a large enough quantity has been accumulated for shipping to Nassau.

Apart from these things the agriculture of the colony is no more than sufficient just to feed the families who live on the land, keeping them in corn (maize), beans and peas, sweet potatoes, cassava, and such-like.

One disadvantage of the sisal industry in the Bahamas is that this hand-cleaned sisal has to be soaked in salt water, and gets impregnated with salt in a way that the machine-cleaned sisal does not. Manufacturers of binder twine have found by experience that a fibre soaked with salt is not so good for their purpose. And so, although there was a great demand during the war for sisal, and prices ranged high, since the reopening of the American market to sisal from Yucatan, Bahamian sisal has again sunk very low and the outlook for the industry is not encouraging.

CHAPTER VIII

WORK OF THE DIOCESE UNDER 'THE LORD EDWARD'

ONE of the finest missionaries who has ever worked in the Bahamas, as has been said already, was the Rev. F. Barrow Matthews. A priest with a real love of souls, he had a wonderful capacity for getting inside the mind of the coloured man. His own mind was an open and very receptive one. Few white men have ever acquired a fuller knowledge of the folk-lore and superstitions of the Bahamian. He had a considerable knowledge of medicine and a little of surgery. He was a preacher of great persuasive power ; with real eloquence and directness he was able to drive home lessons to the hearts and minds of simple coloured people.

This is a specimen of the kind of way in which he would treat such a text as ' Not every one that saith unto Me Lord, Lord, shall enter into the kingdom of heaven ' :

How calm and peaceful everything seems to be this morning. Everything seems to tell us it is the Lord's Day ; the birds even seem to be singing more sweetly than at other times ; the sky itself looks like Sunday.

As I was sitting on the deck of my little sail boat this morning

I watched the children in their nice clean clothes going to Sunday school all smiling and happy. And I saw old Unc' Tom in his nice black frock-coat, and his clean white cravat, and his Bible under his arm, looking so calm and pious. Let us follow Unc' Tom into the meeting-house : he goes into the pulpit and gives out, ' Bred'ren, let us sing to the praise and glory of Gawd hymn no. 799, " This I know, Jesus loves me," yes, Bred'ren, Jesus loves me ' . . . (a long pause). My brethren, the Lord wouldn't touch Unc' Tom with the end of a five fathom sponge staff ! For why ? Because He knows perfectly well that Unc' Tom's sons toted him home drunk last night !

Although Mr. Matthews' earliest work had been done in Cat Island, where his well-laid foundations still survive in spite of many vicissitudes, it is with Andros that his name is chiefly associated. Indeed it would not be too much to say that he was the real ' Apostle ' of Andros. This is not to depreciate the good work done by the two coloured priests, Mr. Sweeting and Mr. Cooper, who had ministered on Andros before, but their work had necessarily been very circumscribed in scope and area ; it was Matthews who began the Church's vigorous offensive up and down the length of Andros.

Although we speak of Andros as if it were one island it is really a group of islands : North Bight, Middle Bight, and South Bight run right through it from sea to sea ; other creeks and ' swashes ' run many miles into the interior ; the interior, most of which is unexplored, consists of vast pine forests and low-lying ground flooded at high tide. Andros is an interesting illustration of the way in which the Bahama Islands have

gradually grown up, crust upon crust, out of the sea, and are still forcing their way upward inch by inch.

The nature of the land makes it impossible for any road to run for more than a few miles. Horses have never been used on Andros as they are on the other islands ; indeed at the present time I doubt if Andros possesses a single horse. All the settlements are along the eastern shore, skirted nearly all the way by a reef which borders on the Tongue of Ocean. The main thoroughfare for Andros is the strip of 'white water' between shore and reef ; a tricky thoroughfare, too, on account of the numberless shoals, sunken rocks, and shallow banks. No vessel drawing more than six feet of water can negotiate it, and there are some places which a schooner of that draught can only cross at high tide. It is essential, therefore, that the parish priest of Andros should be a sailor, and that Matthews was—an intrepid sailor. He was also a practical architect of no mean capacity. No island has been visited more severely by hurricanes than Andros, but there are buildings still standing even after the disastrous 1926 to prove the worth and solidity of Matthews' work.

Andros had had no resident priest for two years when Bishop Edward moved Matthews there from Cat Island at the end of 1889. He at once possessed himself of a boat named the *Elinor*, twenty-four feet on the keel, which served his requirements for many years. A man of iron

constitution himself in those days, he was contemptuous of those who exaggerated the hardships and difficulties of an out-island missionary's life. His description of a fortnight's work in the heat of July makes us feel that there were giants in those days :

I took the whole shore in and out, some one hundred and twenty miles. With only a small boy in the boat I travelled from place to place, sometimes sitting in the blazing sun steering from 5 a.m. to 6 p.m. with just breaks for breakfast and dinner on the boat. After steering all day, fighting with head winds or calms, or flying ahead of heavy squalls, or picking my chance and dodging boiling billows through openings in the reef, evening would bring me to a settlement ; then began services, sermons, lectures, baptisms, etc., sometimes up to 10 p.m. Next morning before sunrise, Celebration ; then on board to the next place, working the boat entirely myself the whole day ; and so on day after day until the end.

During the 'terrific' heat I have built in this yard with my own hands a stone house 15 × 12 for a kitchen, mixing the lime, and building and squaring it all myself, with one boy just to hand up stones and lime. I have just finished cutting down two acres of bush, and planted it out with cotton seed and fibre plants.

Matthews made Mangrove Cay, in the southern part of Andros, his head-quarters ; there he built a fine rectory and the largest church on the island. Land-lubbers frequently get confused between what we sailors call 'up' the shore and 'down' the shore. We always go *up* to the windward, and the prevailing wind in these latitudes being the south-easterly Trade, a southerly direction is always 'up along,' a northerly 'down along.'

The fruits of Matthews' work on Andros may be seen in the twelve churches with which the

island was blessed before the hurricanes of 1926. 'Up along' from Mangrove Cay were churches at Driggs Hill, Long Bay Cays, Black Point, Little Creek, and Mars Bay. 'Down along' were Behring Point, Fresh Creek, Calabash Bay, Stanyard Creek, Mastic Point, and Nicolls Town. This represents a really notable achievement in what had been the most benighted, though the largest, of all the islands of the Bahamas.

Another church on Andros still in building dates from those days, a church at the settlement known by the curious name of Pure Gold. This church, when it is completed (as it should be within the next few months), will be a permanent memorial to a benefactress of the diocese, Miss Isabel Newton. Miss Newton resided for a time on Andros during Matthews' rectorate and was greatly impressed by the Church's work there. Later on she went to South Africa, where she met a tragic death. Besides the money she had given for the building of S. Cecilia's, Pure Gold, it was found that she had left the whole of her not inconsiderable fortune to the Bishop of Nassau for the time being, to be used in his discretion for the work of the Church in the diocese.

At the end of 1893 Matthews obtained the help that he deserved and needed for this vast parish in the ordination of Mr. Webb, a student of Dorchester who had been a pupil of Henry Churton, and who has lived at Fresh Creek from that day to this.

In the previous year Archdeacon Wakefield

had left the diocese after twenty-three years' devoted work. His summary of conditions seems as true to-day as it was then :

I may be asked—speaking with the experience of so many years—‘Do you think that the results of work in the Bahamas are, on the whole, satisfactory?’ While firmly holding that if it should be God’s will we ought to be content to work on generation after generation with scarce any visible results of our labours, I do most emphatically declare that, considering the poverty of our circumstances, the irregular character of our work, and the primitive material with which we had to deal, the results are gratifying beyond all hope. From the beginning God was pleased of His grace to vouchsafe to me a special love for and sympathy with the coloured people. I believed that their mental and spiritual faculties were capable of large development : and have not been disappointed. So far as appreciation of the Catholic Faith and capacity for being educated to holy living are concerned, I hold that our dear Bahamian need not be second to, at any rate, the ordinary Englishman of his class. I do not say that the work can be done in a year or in many years, but accomplished it can be, provided it be done on Catholic, not on Protestant, lines ; and provided further that the teacher be loving, sympathetic, unsparing of himself, not ready to throw up his mission when disappointments come, and instinct with an unyielding belief that with God all things are possible. The people very soon find out whether their priest loves them and believes in them ; this being ascertained, nothing can exceed their willingness to place themselves unreservedly in his hands. Protestantism, according to the ordinary meaning of the word, will never make the coloured races what they should be, either in body or soul. This is the secret of success in the Bahamas, of failure in the Southern States of America. We must teach them the dignity of the body through its union with Christ in Holy Baptism, the exceeding sinfulness of sin, how to combat temptation, the absolute necessity of the Sacraments, and, above all, train their yet unstable natures to a frequent and proper use of sacramental Confession. To attain this there must be

catechizing and instruction—in church, in school, in season and out of season. There must be not only a reverent but, so far as can be had, a splendid ritual, with lights, vestments, incense, processions, much singing; festival and fast must be duly observed; and, above all, there must be, wherever not impossible, the daily pleading of the Holy Sacrifice of the Altar. Where these things are found coupled with failure, the fault lies somewhere at the priest's door, not entirely at that of the people. In my own church we have attained to a ritual as advanced as is to be found in any church in England, and the people understand and value it. They attend not as gazers but as devout and reverent worshippers, and any other mode of approaching God would be foreign to their conception of what worship is.

My first experience of the Church in the Bahamas was that it was an exotic, a feeble importation from the mother-country for the exclusive benefit of English men and women. There has been a crisis. The English element has deserted Nassau almost to a man; but the Church, realizing by disestablishment her divine character, and adapting herself, as she can do, to the genius of those to whom she is sent, has succeeded, and will succeed, in training tens of thousands, not of Anglicans—we can leave those to the mother-country—but of West Indian Catholics, who, according to the powers the good God has given them, will glorify the Lord in the isles of the sea.

The policy outlined by Archdeacon Wakefield was at this time the general policy of the diocese, although Christ Church, S. Matthew's, and Turks Islands, where the congregations contained a larger proportion of white people, clung to Protestant traditions. In Turks Islands Father Crofton did his best to break down some of these, and, though he met with sharp antagonism, he was able to lay foundations for the work of subsequent priests, and his name is generally venerated there to-day.

Christ Church and S. Matthew's remained strong citadels of Protestantism, although Dean Young, who succeeded Dean Swann, persuaded his congregation to tolerate a brass cross upon the altar. There was also an out-island settlement, a settlement on Long Island known as Simms', which was a solitary outpost of the same tradition, and which was to be the centre of a considerable amount of faction a little later.

But, although there had been some lack of cordiality in the relations between these two town parishes and the rest of the diocese, there was nothing in the nature of an open rift until after the coming of the Rev. W. S. Lowndes as Rector of S. Mary's.

Lowndes, who had been Vice-Principal of Ely and subsequently, for a year, of Codrington College, Barbados, was a very remarkable man ; he ought not to be judged by certain eccentricities which manifested themselves in later years when, broken in health, he had returned to settle in England. A great artist, the whole interior decoration of S. Mary's, which owes its beautiful chancel and chapels to him, was done by his own hand. Although he himself could not tell one note of music from another, the music at S. Mary's was his greatest care ; everything had to be most scrupulously correct ; plainsong was to be the standard, and the whole of the propers of the Mass were arranged by him for the year to plainsong melodies. At that time he was an enthusiast for the Sarum Use, and he introduced Croft's

version of the Psalter and Plainsong Masses, as used at S. Matthew's, Westminster.

Up to that time the clergy of the diocese had been mostly self-taught in matters of ritual and ceremonial, and the ceremonial adopted at S. Agnes' certainly conformed to no known use. Lowndes was the first to introduce the Missal edited by Dr. Salisbury Price, which follows the use of Sarum. The younger clergy at once accepted Lowndes as their master, and for many years the teaching and authority of Lowndes reigned supreme. In order to provide his choir and congregation with all the proper words and music for the course of the liturgical year, he installed a printing press of his own at the rectory, and printed everything with his own hands. A set of pigeon-holes in the sacristy of S. Mary's contains many hundreds of little brown-bound booklets representing Lowndes' labours.

Although he was himself unmusical, this deficiency was made good by his sister, an accomplished musician, who undertook the training of the choir. The chief pillars of S. Mary's singing to-day are some of Miss Lowndes' old boys.

Lowndes went back on the Sarum Use later and decided that the proper use to follow was the modern Roman, which he instructed Charles Smith to introduce at S. Mary's while he himself was away on furlough ; and so apparelled amices and girded albs disappeared from the diocese to be replaced by lace cottas.

Lowndes' real scholarship and strong person-

ality gave him a position of authority with which none but the Bishop or his brother, Henry Churton, could possibly vie. Perhaps the admiring submission accorded to him by the other clergy may have increased a natural dogmatism which had probably grown upon him as tutor of theological colleges.

Whatever belief he might hold, or whatever practice he might wish at the moment to inculcate, would be done with the whole of his heart and mind and soul and strength ; everything must be pressed to its logical conclusion with the utmost rigour, and at the moment nothing else mattered. If a rule was a rule there was no room for exceptions.

In the days of his retirement (about the time when he formally excommunicated the Church of England, the Church of Rome, and every other organized body of Christians for apostasy), the duty which he was urging with the greatest vehemence was the practice of daily Communion. To that end he had caused some scandal in the London diocese by giving the Blessed Sacrament to lay people to take home with them to reserve in their own houses, pleading the practice of the early Christians in support, despite the fact that the Church had subsequently forbidden it so definitely. He was also extremely emphatic in favour of Communion in one kind for the laity, grounding his teaching upon a very strange interpretation of some of our Lord's words. To him, at that time, daily Communion was the

only thing that mattered ; it had become almost a fetish.

It would be a surprise to any one who knew Lowndes in those days to learn that this was the exact reverse of the position adopted by him in the Nassau days. For at S. Mary's his fetish had been the fencing of the altar from unworthy communicants, and to that end the insistence upon compulsory confession before every communion. The result of this was far-reaching—for its effects were not confined to S. Mary's. Lowndes' disciples became imbued with a Jansenist view of the Sacraments ; rules unparalleled in the Catholic Church came to be imposed all over the diocese, and accepted for the most part by the people as the rule of the Catholic Church.

On the one hand this tended to make Holy Communion a very rare and occasional incident in the life of the average Church member, a tradition which, though it has long vanished at S. Mary's, is still extremely hard to break down in some of the other parishes. On the other hand it tended to evacuate the Sacrament of Penance of its real meaning and value ; it became merely a formal gateway to communion. Lowndes' own teaching would probably have afforded the necessary correctives, but in the general the stress was all upon confession, and neither contrition nor amendment found much place in the minds of the people.

Many circumstances combine to make the hearings of confessions in the Bahamas a very

different thing from what it is in an English parish ; many of the people cannot read, they possess no manuals of devotion, in out-stations their preparation for the Sacraments has usually been of a somewhat sketchy nature, for the most part they have not much sense of sin, and their memories are very short, and so, as a rule, the priest has to help them with questions.

What wonder then if, with confession before every communion compulsory, it had come to be looked on as only a viva voce examination before admission to the altar ! Add to that the practice, which obtained in some parishes, of the priest giving a ticket for communion to the penitent after confession (thus destroying the last vestige of the anonymity which Catholic custom requires), and confession is likely to become still more unpopular. And then, if it is only a matter of passing a tiresome examination, why not pass it as easily as possible ? Hence the probabilities of bad confessions were extremely strong.

Every priest in the diocese would agree that the importance of regular and frequent confession cannot be stressed too emphatically, but behind that, and along with it, there must be a solid body of teaching on the nature of sin, contrition, and amendment. Without that, insistence on compulsory confession before each communion is only likely to defeat its own end and will effect nothing towards the building up of Christian character.

However, Lowndes' rule on the subject of con-

fession became the rule of most of the parishes in the diocese, and it was one of the things that did most to prejudice old-fashioned Church people in Nassau against any Catholic innovations. Candles on the altar, for example, were taken as a sure signal that compulsory confession would come next, and therefore candles should only be placed on Christ Church altar over certain people's dead bodies ! Even as recently as within the last five years some of the more ignorant people at Christ Church were told that if they once took Communion in wafer-bread they would be compelled to go to confession ever after !

Bishop Edward himself believed that confession should be urged as strongly as possible—short of making it absolutely compulsory—upon our people, because of the very great prevalence of sins of the flesh among them. But, as a matter of fact, that would not apply in the case of older people, many of whom really live extremely holy lives. At the same time, in view of all their circumstances and traditions, Bishop Edward was inclined to doubt whether a Bahamian negro was really capable of ' formal ' mortal sin.

Another priest quite as ' extreme ' as Lowndes who came to the diocese in 1896 was the Hon. Edward Wallop, Vice-Principal of Burgh Theological College. Wallop has been described by one of his brother priests as ' a brilliant meteor who came across our sky and in two years made a mark on the diocese that will never be forgotten.' The whole of his work was done with

Charles Smith in the parish of S. Patrick's, Eleuthera ; he devoted himself especially to the district known as the East End of Eleuthera, from Bannerman Town to Rock Sound. His influence there was a most extraordinary one : no one has ever won the affections of the coloured people so rapidly or so thoroughly as he did. Under his magic touch the desert rejoiced and blossomed like the rose. Never very strong physically, and of a highly strung temperament, he literally killed himself with over-work. Taking no stipend from the diocese, he lavished his own private means on the work of church building. For the last year of his life he lived without a home, lodging where he could in the houses of coloured folk, or travelling from station to station spending hours and days in the most uncomfortable little boats beneath a burning sun often with hardly any food. With a constitution thus weakened by privation he had little power of resistance and he succumbed to an attack of fever in December, 1898.

Bishop Edward wrote of him in his diary, 'The two things Wallop hated most were impurity and Anglican chants !' But Wallop's name and memory survive and always will survive in Eleuthera ; it had been the dearest wish of his heart that the district in which he had laboured, and for which he gave his life, should be made into an independent parish. This was done by the diocese in his memory, and an endowment fund for that purpose was created by his brothers and sisters. There is also another memorial of

him in a most beautiful tabernacle of ebony and silver, which had belonged to his family, and which stands over the high altar at S. Patrick's, Governor's Harbour.

The Bishop's own health was now beginning to fail ; never particularly fond of the sea, he found the out-island visitation work more and more trying. The old *Message of Peace* had been sold and a more commodious vessel of forty-six tons bought for the diocese at Dover ; she was fitted with good cabin accommodation, but ' the Lord Edward ' only made one trip in her. His brother, Henry Churton, whom he had appointed Archdeacon, did a great many trips round the out-islands ; but, of course, he could neither confirm nor consecrate churches, and, with so vigorous a work going on, there were many candidates to be confirmed and a succession of churches to be consecrated. Fortunately at the end of 1899 the Bishop was able to welcome his old friend Dr. Hornby, who had been the first Bishop of Nyasaland, as a winter visitor to Nassau. Accompanied by Father Weigall, Bishop Hornby visited all the islands to Windward as far as Grand Turk, confirmed two hundred and eighty-nine candidates, and consecrated two new churches—S. Mary's at Grand Turk, the fruit of Father Crofton's labours, and Holy Innocents at Ragged Island, built by the Wilson family. Thus Bishop Hornby gained his first acquaintance with a diocese over which a little later he was to reign so long and happily. His first impressions of an

out-island parish are worth recording. He is describing Long Island :

It took us a whole week to visit this parish. Fancy a parish three miles only wide but from ninety to one hundred miles long ! There is one parish church and ten consecrated chapels of ease. I have thought Chollerton a difficult parish to work, but what should I do with Long Island ? However, there is nothing like having to do a thing, as the beaver said who had to climb the tree, ' the dog was crowding him so.' They have not got the luxurious accommodation of the North British Railway on this island. The shore is so indented with huge bays or bights, and studded with long jungly coral points, jutting out with dangerous coral reefs far into the sea, that it is impossible for the yacht to moor all down the island, and it is inconvenient, sometimes dangerous, for little boats. Still it has to be done, and we, with the parish priest and a young Bahamian who had lent us himself and a little cockle-shell of a boat, had a curious five hours voyage from one chapel of ease to another. We amused ourselves for the greater part of the journey in baling out.

Failing a boat, the enterprising missionary falls back on the island roads and horses. I should like to see our revered churchwardens riding those horses over those roads. The horses are adapted to the roads and the roads to the horses. The roads were possibly roads two hundred years ago ! The enthusiastic islander points with pardonable pride to certain grooves in the solid coral rock that is the basis of the road. These grooves, he avers, were actually worn by cart wheels (*vide* the mark of chariot wheels in the gateways at Chester Camp). However, the last cart wheel has now deserted the island, except the one which an enterprising catechist has adapted as a chandelier and slung in one of the little chapels, as a warning to other cart wheels presumably.

The horses are adapted to the roads. Two hundred years ago their forefathers may have been horses. Now they are hardly to be called ponies, i.e. twelve to thirteen hands high, and weedy at that, some of them, but still most of them giving

one the idea of a horse rather than a pony. Most probably from the agility they display and their eye-sight, which apparently is better at night than day, there must be a strain of goat or monkey, and owl blood in them.

The roads are past describing. Imagine the Swinburn run dry and christened a road, and imagine yourself, fair or gallant reader, possibly turning the scale at two hundred pounds, being asked to ride fifteen miles on this road after morning service on Sunday to evening service at the nearest chapel of ease, arriving, if you do arrive, in pitchy darkness after sunset. Yet they say these ponies never let you down and I can believe it, for my gallant little barb only prostrated himself and me once on the particular Sunday to which I refer, and that was in broad daylight. Possibly he was thinking of something else at the time.

But to be serious. The Church has a wonderful hold of these good islanders. The only competitors with the Church are a set of Christians called the Baptists. Of these you people of Chollerton know little. The spread of their doctrine among the African population of the Bahamas dates back to the days of slavery, and is a dark blot and disgrace in the history of our own fellow-Churchmen in these islands, a history of sinful pride of colour, for which we in this generation must repent at leisure. Still we are making up for lost ground.

What a stranger like myself notices in the Church life here is the wonderful generosity of service, and the liberality and hospitality of a people who are very poor. Since I have been in these out-islands I have almost forgotten the use of money. Everything that the people have seems to be put at the free disposal of the man who comes to deliver to them the message of the Gospel. Food and lodging, boats and horses, all are given. One and each seems delighted to add his own little gift. One sends some fruit or vegetables, another some bread. Perhaps in a more wealthy part you get the present of a chicken. If one puts up in a little cottage, one is made welcome of their best, and all is bright and clean. What our good, kind hosts do themselves for themselves during our stay, I cannot say. I do not think they care, for their one thought seems to be to make their guests comfortable.

The parish priest is only able to visit each chapel once in six weeks. He then generally stays a week in the lay reader's or catechist's house. These lay readers are all volunteers and unpaid. They take great pride in the little chapels under their charge, and do a great deal even in the preparation of Confirmation candidates. One even conducts the day school, at least he gives three days a week to it, whilst the other three days are devoted to his farm. An old man he is now, the whole population having passed through his hands. He presented no less than thirty-six candidates for Confirmation.

Bishop Hornby's letter, written nearly thirty years ago, is a wonderfully good picture of the characteristics of Long Island parish to-day. There are, however, now portions at least of the road here, and on other islands, which are something better than the dry bed of a mountain torrent. Indeed only two days ago I was actually able to drive a Ford car on Eleuthera, lent by the Methodist minister, from Governor's Harbour, seventeen miles to Savannah Sound. It is true that for about a third of the way we were on low gear jumping from rock to rock, and that several times we had to stop and dig away the sand from round the wheels, but still the journey was done there and back. Eleuthera is, however, the only island outside New Providence where such a thing is possible as yet.

Bishop Churton left Nassau for England to seek medical advice in the spring of 1900.

A little before this a development had begun which was destined in the course of a few years to change the whole face and character of Nassau, viz. the American invasion. Mr. Flagler, the

creator of Florida as a winter resort for chilly northerners, with its railway system and vast hotels, had cast his eyes across the Gulf Stream upon Nassau. The building of the Hotel Colonial by him upon a site formerly occupied by the old Barracks was the beginning of a startling transformation of Nassau which has by no means yet reached its zenith.

The resignation of the Bishop as a result of medical advice came as little of a surprise to his clergy or those who knew him. The last days of his reign had been clouded by unhappy disturbances of which the causes have already been suggested. Ecclesiastical controversies had been allowed to sleep since the days of Bishop Venables. Bishop Cramer-Roberts had been able to carry a 'Declaration of Principles' for the self-governing diocese through the Synod without a single dissident.

We have noticed a lack of cordiality between the two old-fashioned Nassau congregations and the rest of the diocese, and there was at a certain missionary meeting a little breeze between Dean Young and some of his brethren resulting from an innocent reference to Luther. But so long as Dean Young, who was a most amiable man, was at the Cathedral there was never likely to be anything of the nature of a rupture.

Unhappily the 'Crisis in the Church' at home, engineered by Mr. John Kensit and exploited by Sir William Harcourt and Lady Wimborne, made itself felt in the Bahamas. Bishop Edward, in

view of the relation between the diocese and the Church of England, held that the opinion given by the Archbishops of Canterbury and York on Incense and Reservation were in no way binding upon him or his clergy. A series of violent letters began to appear in the *Nassau Guardian* in the spring of 1899, attacking the clergy as traitors and law-breakers. When the Synod met in June an address was presented to the Bishop in which the clergy were charged with being engaged in a 'wicked conspiracy to undo the work of the Reformation.' The Bishop, in his charge, upheld those who had been attacked, and the Synod, by a large majority, adopted a series of resolutions repudiating the charge of disloyalty, and expressing its perfect confidence in the wisdom and ability of the Bishop to decide all questions which might be raised with reference to doctrine and ceremonial. The defeated minority thereupon withdrew, the three lay delegates who had opposed the resolutions resigning their seats in the Synod and the two clergymen (Mr. Meeres of Christ Church, and Mr. Saunders of S. Matthew's) who had taken the same side declining to serve any longer on the Diocesan Council. At the end of the year the vestries of Christ Church and S. Matthew's declined to pay their canonical assessments to the Diocesan Treasurer. This refusal, as afterwards explained, was intended as a protest against the action of the Bishop and Synod, and they defended it on the ground that the latter had placed themselves in

a position of rebellion against the Church in England.

All this, as may be imagined, got very much on the nerves of the Bishop, who was an extremely sensitive man, and probably did a great deal to accentuate his ill health. A state of acute tension between the two parties existed for a long period, and it was in this unhappy atmosphere that the Synod was summoned, in November, 1900, for the election of a new Bishop.

CHAPTER IX

BISHOP HENRY

AT the time of Bishop Edward Churton's resignation the procedure to be adopted for filling the vacant see was regulated by Canon as follows. It was the duty of the Deputy President of the Synod as soon as he received official notification of the Bishop's resignation to summon the Synod, three months' notice being given of the date of assembly. The Deputy President of the Synod was the venerable Father Fisher, Rector of S. Agnes' ; the Synod therefore could not meet before the winter of 1900.

The nomination would have to proceed from the clergy, supported by a majority of not less than two-thirds of the number entitled to sit in Synod, and be submitted by them to the lay representatives. If two-thirds of the lay members entitled to sit should agree to the candidate chosen by the clergy he would be declared elected; if not, the clergy would have to proceed to another nomination, and so on until two-thirds of both orders should have agreed.

The Synod might, however, by a majority of two-thirds of each order refer the selection of a bishop to any person or persons outside the

colony, subject, or not, to the subsequent approbation of the Synod.

In any case the election had to be confirmed by the Primate of the West Indies and by a majority of the Bishops of the Province.

The Synod met for the election of a bishop on November 27th. The clergy had decided to nominate the Venerable Henry Churton, Archdeacon, and brother of the late Bishop. Father Fisher was not well enough to preside and, in his absence, the chair was taken by the senior clergyman of the diocese, Parson Saunders, Rector of S. Matthew's.

The proceedings were extremely stormy. S. Matthew's had elected as their lay delegate Mr. David Brice, churchwarden of Christ Church. The vestries both of Christ Church and S. Matthew's were under censure from the Synod for their stubborn refusal to pay their diocesan assessments. Father Lowndes moved that Mr. Brice should not be permitted by the Synod to take part in its proceedings until he had withdrawn from the disobedient vestry of which he was a member and made his submission to the Synod by signing the canonical declaration of obedience to its authority. Then the storm broke ; a disturbance was created by some members of the audience, one of whom actually attempted to make a speech to the Synod : the hall had to be cleared and the rest of the proceedings carried on with closed doors. Mr. Saunders had disapproved of the action of his vestry, but not so the Rector of Christ Church.

Mr. Meeres had gone so far as to compare the late Bishop to a colonial governor who 'had torn down the British flag and substituted for it the flag of the enemy.' The Synod passed a resolution expressing its opinion that his action was deserving of grave censure. It also disallowed Mr. Brice's vote. As a matter of fact Mr. Brice's vote would not have made any difference one way or the other, but this action afforded Archbishop Nuttall the opportunity of quashing the election.

On the second evening a petition was presented to the Synod by Mr. Meeres signed by about two hundred and fifty people, of whom a large number were not on the register of any church, praying the Synod to delegate its right of selection to some authority outside the diocese. A resolution in this sense was moved by Mr. Saunders, whereupon Father Smith moved an amendment, 'That the Synod elect its own Bishop,' which was carried by a large majority.

On November 30th Father Fisher nominated the Venerable Henry Norris Churton ; sixteen of the clergy recorded their votes in his favour. Parson Saunders was absent through sickness ; Mr. Meeres did not vote. The nomination was put to the laity ; four delegates were absent, the remaining eleven supported it unanimously.

But the struggle was not yet over ; through the action of the dissatisfied minority the diocese was to be kept without a bishop for nearly two years. Writing to the Associates of the Nassau

Mission in the spring of 1901 Henry Churton states :

I am not yet in a position to subscribe myself Bishop-elect, because the election is not complete until it is confirmed by the Archbishop and Bishops of the West Indian Province. A delay has been caused through the action of the Rector of Christ Church who, finding himself alone in a minority in the Synod, has taken upon himself to protest against the choice of nineteen of his brother clergy who either voted for me or would have done so if they had been able to take part in the proceedings. The author of the protest has been only five years in the diocese, and of the nineteen to whom he is opposing himself, all but four are his seniors in the matter of service. He has the support of his vestry who have been for some time in open rebellion against the Bishop and Synod, refusing to fulfil their canonical obligations, and also of some ladies of his congregation who have placed themselves under the patronage of Lady Wimborne and her league. The opponents have made it plain that their object is to obtain indirectly a condemnation of the teaching of the late Bishop and his predecessors in office, no other reason being alleged for their opposition to me than that my views are the same as theirs, and that they know that if I am raised to the episcopate the work will be carried on on the same lines as heretofore in accordance with what have been the traditions of the diocese since the days of Bishop Venables. The situation occasions some anxiety, because the appointment of such a bishop as the objectors desire would possibly lead to very serious consequences as regards the future of the mission. . . . So far as the mission itself is concerned I have great cause for thankfulness that the call has come to me at a time when it is fully manned by an efficient staff of clergy, and the work is everywhere being carried on loyally and faithfully on the lines instituted by its first founder, Bishop Venables, and in accordance with the principles which he taught. Assuredly no missionary bishop could be happier than I should have reason to be in having under me a set of men so devoted to their work, so thoroughly imbued with the missionary spirit, and so united in brotherly

affection among themselves. It would be sad indeed if anything were to happen to break up a condition of affairs so full of promise for the future welfare and extension of the Church in these islands. When my brother entered upon his work fifteen years ago he found only fourteen clergy, eight of whom were paid by the Government. At his resignation he left a staff of twenty-two, only three of whom are paid by Government. This shows how the work has grown.

Archbishop Enos Nuttall, of Jamaica, the Primate of the West Indies, whose own convictions were of a decidedly Protestant trend, was by no means averse from having a finger in the pie of Nassau affairs, and it happened that the Provincial Synod was just about to meet at Jamaica.

The Diocesan Synod had a one-day session in March.

On the 24th of April Father Fisher received a cable from the Archbishop, 'Election Churton declared invalid letters follow.' In a letter a month later the Archbishop communicated two resolutions which had been passed by the Provincial Synod. 'It was agreed formally to communicate to the Diocese of Nassau the unanimous decision of the Bishops of the Province of the West Indies, now present in Synod, that in consequence of the failure to constitute the Synod held in November last for the election of a bishop in accordance with the provisions of the Diocesan Canons, and of the failure to allow Mr. D. A. Brice to take his seat and speak and vote in the Synod as a member of Synod for S. Matthew's Church, apart from other reasons, the election

of Archdeacon Churton to be Bishop of Nassau is invalid ; and that the Synod must proceed in due course to a fresh election.'

' It was further unanimously agreed to request the Archbishop to advise the Synod of Nassau as to safeguards which should be taken to ensure the validity of any future election.'

The Diocesan Synod met again in June, but were unable to proceed to a fresh election as the canonical requirement of three months' notice had to be complied with. The Synod declined to follow the ' earnest counsel ' of the Archbishop and Bishops of the Province in regard to the accepting and giving ' authoritative sanction to Archbishop Benson's judgement in the Lincoln case and the opinions of the Archbishops of Canterbury and York in the cases of Reservation and Incense.'

Unfortunately in this Synod there were some errors in the minutes which the Archdeacon corrected on his own responsibility. This led to a bitter and acrimonious discussion in which certain members used most intemperate language amounting to a charge against the Archdeacon of ' tampering with the minute book ' for dishonourable purposes.

A special session for the election of a bishop was held in November, 1901. The Archdeacon was again nominated. Mr. Meeres expressed his desire to withdraw his opposition if the Archdeacon would only declare that as Bishop he would rule the diocese in accordance with the

recommendations contained in the recent Pastoral Letter of the Archbishop and Bishops of the Province. The Archdeacon was not able to give such a pledge. The election was carried by the clergy with only Mr. Meeres voting against it, and there were two dissentients among the laity. On March 10, 1902, Archbishop Nuttall cabled the West Indian Bishops' unanimous confirmation of the election.

Henry Churton was consecrated Bishop on Sunday, July 13, 1902, at S. Paul's Cathedral. Like his brother, he was a scholar of Eton, where he won the Newcastle, and subsequently he won a scholarship at University College, Oxford. He was ordained in 1869, served curacies at Stoke-on-Trent, East Retford, and West Bromwich. From West Bromwich, where he was first vicar of the new parish of S. John's, he went, on the breakdown of his wife's health, to the small country parish of Avonwick in Devonshire.

Bishop Henry returned to Nassau on the 1st of September. He was given an enthusiastic welcome by all classes. Old animosities and controversies were completely laid aside, and although, during the interregnum, assiduous attempts had been made to fan the flames of Protestant prejudice, the return of the Bishop began an era of peace and concord which lasted almost unbroken for twenty years.

Dear old Parson Saunders had passed away just two months before the Bishop's consecration, which left Father Fisher the sole survivor of the

old state-paid rectors. Three parishes were vacant—S. Matthew's, Nassau, S. Thomas', Turks Islands, and S. David's, Long Cay.

The Bishop's first out-island visitation after his return was to his old friend Webb at Fresh Creek, Andros. Here he had been in the habit of making many informal visits and had spent many happy days. On this occasion he had the joy of confirming no fewer than fifty-six candidates, of whom nineteen had walked twelve miles in the grilling September heat over heavy sands and rocks from Stanyard Creek. The following day he consecrated his first church at Behring Point. Those were the palmy days of Andros before proselytizers had disturbed the minds of the people and drawn so many away by appealing to the less worthy side of them. Altogether working 'up along' from Fresh Creek to Mars Bay on this first visitation cruise Bishop Henry confirmed one hundred and forty-six people and consecrated three churches.

The next twelve months was a strenuous time for him, as there were so many arrears of out-island visitation work to be made up, and he was at sea incessantly. *The Message of Peace*, which had been giving ceaseless trouble, was converted from a ketch into a schooner, and this improved her sailing qualities to some extent.

The year 1902 marked a bad outbreak of heathenish practices on Andros. The old African superstitions die very hard, and there is still a good deal of obeah practised not only on some

of the less enlightened islands, but even on the outskirts of Nassau itself. The Bahamas are only a few hours sail from Haiti, where appalling things have been done in the name of voodooism. Father Matthews collected a great deal of information about obeah and witchcraft both on Cat Island and on Andros.

Within only a few months of Bishop Henry's visit to Mars Bay the whole settlement was deserted. There had been a family quarrel, and one of the elder women betook herself to Nassau and came back armed with 'witch.' This she proceeded to put into her neighbours' fields, wells, beds, and cooking pots. A panic ensued and the whole population fled in terror. About the same time a man at Little Creek was charged with stealing a child for witch purposes; the old African witchcraft required the killing of a child under seven years of age once in every seven years; the blood and some parts of the body were used in preparing the witch mixture. In this instance the crime was not brought home to the accused, and no case of child stealing has come to light since that date. The ordinary witch mixture, however, consists of nothing more gruesome than grave-earth and sea water taken at the time of the spring tide. Some of this hung in a bottle is supposed effectually to protect a field or a fruit-tree against praedial larceny, as the offender will swell up and die. It is also supposed to be a good thing in the interests of a prisoner to sprinkle it in the doorway through which the magistrate

must pass. A recent Chief Justice, Sir Daniel Tudor, told me that he had experienced this more than once.

Father Matthews relates that one of his choir-boys, while weeding a public burial-ground, came across a piece of ship's ballast about two inches under the earth on top of a grave, together with a two-shilling piece. This had been placed there by the captain of a vessel to secure her good sailing qualities, and the money was the payment due to the spirit. Woe betide the man who tries to cheat the spirit by taking earth from the grave for witch without paying the price ! It is recorded of one man who did so that on his next sponging trip he could hook nothing : every time he put his glass in the water he could only see the face of the corpse whose spirit he had defrauded.

The only Synod in which Henry Churton presided as Bishop accomplished the arduous and noteworthy task of a complete Revision of the Diocesan Canons. This Synod also made it abundantly clear that Nassau had no intention of permitting any encroachment upon the powers and functions of its own Bishop by the Metropolitan of the Province or any one else. At the same time the Bishop's charge was eminently pacific in character : he asked the clergy to join with him in giving up the ceremonial use of incense, except on great festivals, thus conforming the use of the diocese to that of the Diocese of London. He had no intention of interfering with the Reservation of the Blessed Sacrament for com-

munion of the sick, but he expressly forbade any other services of the nature of Benediction. Thus he went as far as he could go towards meeting the wishes of the Archbishop and other Bishops of the Province. The Protestant minority found that their new Bishop was one who could be trusted to rule and not to be ruled, as they had feared, by some of the more ardent spirits in the diocese.

In spite of all the strenuous work of his first fifteen months as Bishop, following upon a prolonged period of acute strain, Bishop Henry had mapped out a heavy programme of visitation for the year 1904.

It was to begin with a mission at Inagua. The missionaries were Father Wilkinson, Rector of S. Paul's, Long Island, and Father Weigall. *The Message of Peace* left Nassau early in January, picking up Father Wilkinson at Long Island. There the Bishop tried, though in vain, to heal the strife at Simms', the one out-island station which had been affected by Protestant faction. Leaving Long Island, the yacht made a remarkably quick passage to Inagua. There the Bishop opened the mission, and there he said Mass for the last time. Leaving the two priests behind, he sailed for Ragged Island, the most southerly settlement on the Great Bahama Bank, with the understanding that he should return to pick them up at the end of the week.

Father Wilkinson was able to get off on the day after the close of the mission. Weigall

waited on, day after day, for more than a week. At last, unable to bear the suspense any longer, he chartered a vessel to take him to Nassau. In Castle Island Passage he met the yacht, but no Bishop!

What had happened at Ragged Island? The story is told by Miss Mary Wilson, a member of the family to which the church on Ragged Island owes its foundation.

The yacht arrived here from Inagua on Tuesday, January 19th. It was blowing so hard that no boat could go out to him to the anchorage. The following day, when the tide was up, our own sailing boat, the *Glen*, was sent for him. They were detained aboard the yacht, and so, the tide ebbing, they got stuck on the sandbank coming ashore. Mr. Hallam (deacon at Exuma) and the acting catechist, Lincoln Wallace, (both of my brothers are away), went to meet his Lordship on the road. When he reached our gate the whole body of Church people met him. He seemed so pleased and happy over it all, and a service was held at 6 p.m., the Bishop giving a most beautiful address. After service he came to our house and asked to be taken aboard. We all pleaded with him to remain ashore, as it was blowing so hard. He replied, 'No, I must get on board.' Then we told him that there was no boat to take him. He asked if he could not get a pole boat to take him to the *Glen*. Some one said, 'Yes, there is one at the wharf.' He at once got up and made his two men take him off in her, arranging to return and hold the Confirmation at 4 p.m. the next day, and to come ashore in his own boat. They reached the *Glen*, but in trying to hoist the sail the block broke down from the mast-head. Then they tried to get aboard the yacht in the small boat. . . .

We were very anxious all next morning, and kept inquiring if the boat was seen alongside the yacht. We could not see from shore where the vessels lay. People told us that they could see two boats astern, so we were satisfied that he had reached the yacht in safety. However, I began to get very

anxious in the afternoon, for I knew how punctual his Lordship always is, and he should have arrived. At last I told Mr. Hallam that I was sure something was wrong. He then got two men to walk with him to the Point. They returned after dark with the news of the loss. You can imagine what a night we all passed. The next morning the two men were found on the cay, and our worst fears were confirmed. As soon as the mud had somewhat settled after the gale, and the wind had abated, boats searched the harbour, and again the next day, but nothing has been found. Had my brother been at home this perhaps would never have happened. But I may not say so; it was ordered by the Divine Will. God had called him. It is a great grief to us and, I know, an awful shock to the whole Church.

The boat in which the Bishop had attempted to get aboard the yacht was a small one of only nine feet keel; probably she was leaking badly; the tide was running strong, it was pitch dark, and seas were big. The two men with the Bishop were his butler, Melvin Ferguson, and Alfred Nesbitt, one of the ship's crew, the latter sculling from the stern. Both the men tried in vain to persuade the Bishop not to venture out in the deep water where the schooner was anchored, but Bishop Henry was, as we say in the Bahamas, 'hard-head'; he had no more love for sleeping ashore than his present successor, he wanted the quiet of his own cabin. Soon after they got off the bank into the deep water a big sea swamped the boat and she capsized. The two men caught hold of the Bishop and got him on to the upturned boat, but another sea soon washed him off. He was caught again, and held on to the boat until another big wave carried him away out of sight of

the men altogether. Nesbitt and Ferguson, who had done all that was humanly possible to save the Bishop, managed to hang on to the boat themselves until it drifted near enough for them to see Pigeon Cay, to which they swam.

Unhappily Burrows, the captain, had assumed that the Bishop was spending the night ashore ; all the yacht's crew had turned in and no watch was being kept. If only it had been otherwise the Bishop might have been saved as the boat capsized actually within hailing distance of the yacht. As it was, those aboard the yacht did not know of the accident until the following evening when a boat came off from the shore to make inquiries about the Bishop, and so it was not until the Friday morning that the two men on the cay were discovered and rescued.

The cay, which is now the property of the diocese, is crowned to-day by a large cross of native hard-wood set in a granite foundation. On it, under the name of the Bishop and the date, is inscribed the text : *There stood by me this night the angel of the Lord, whose I am and whom I serve.*

This chapter may well be ended with some extracts from a sketch of Bishop Henry's brief episcopate written by one of his clergy.

From the day he landed in Nassau as a bishop the Bishop's powers expanded to a degree that none ever deemed possible, his character visibly ripened, his affections warmed.

His own powers of administration were prepared for exercise by the centralizing of the diocesan work under his own roof.

Much that had gone before in previous years had tended to make this more possible—his work as treasurer, for instance. The Bishop had a love for figures that well astonished us, and he would have relinquished his watch over accounts and ledgers with too great a regret. He never contemplated doing so. He would keep all in his own hands : the registry too, containing all records of diocesan property, should be at Addington House, for the work he was to do in the consecrating of buildings and cemeteries required constant access to these deeds. . . .

With all his taciturnity, he had a real love of pleasant social intercourse with others, and was more than gratified by the kindness of those who found their way to his drawing-room, and was most punctual in seeing that every call was returned.

He exercised his hospitality chiefly, however, towards his own clergy, particularly those from the island parishes. The Bishop was always glad to see them. He was anxious to learn from them all details with regard to their parish work, and he was glad to see them for their own sakes. He stood in the somewhat unusual position of one who was to them at once a brother and a father. With many of his clergy, for years past, he had been glad to share, as a brother-priest, in their isolation, their scanty food, and their hardships. Over and over again had he been sharing dangers with these men whom he was called upon to rule ; but they were still brothers, advice was still to be sought the one by the other. ‘ I want to ask you what you think,’ or ‘ I want to ask your advice,’ were words often on his lips, for he was a truly humble bishop. On some occasions, these friendly conversations with—shall we say it?—the seldom absent pipe, were prolonged far into the night, and they were rare opportunities for men who live much alone on their islands to ask advice from their bishop, and his advice was felt to be the outcome of long experience, not only in England but in the Bahamas, proving to us that he had been much more observant than we had given him credit for being.

Bishop Churton took an especial pleasure in the consecration of new churches, eight or nine of which were thus set apart during his episcopate. He had prepared for use a special service of consecration which involved a somewhat elaborate

ceremonial . . . no church was consecrated until a formal petition had been presented and a sentence of consecration duly read, published, and signed before the congregation. . . . A settlement might be small, a church half filled, accessories meagre to a degree, but no matter, it was all of like importance. . . .

The Bishop had deep affections—no one could doubt it, had they watched his face lighten up with welcome as he would stand on the deck of his mission yacht, and welcome one or other of his clergy whose parish he had come to visit. There was no restraint between clergy and bishop in the Diocese of Nassau. If his affections were really greater and deeper than a casual observer could discern, so too none could doubt of his moral courage. For unpleasant tasks were forced upon him, and he felt as much natural shrinking from the discharge of such duties as any man could feel, yet he went through with them. . . .

The Bishop's island visitations were always planned with great forethought, and never left to chance, having regard always to such details as only one who had a long acquaintance with the prevailing winds, and the peculiar geographical circumstances of his diocese. . . . The sea was his delight; he feared no dangers, he shrank from no fatigue, he was satisfied always with the merest handful of people to whom he could minister, he could wait patiently for people to assemble long after the patience of the clergy accompanying him was exhausted. His Confirmation addresses astonished the hearers by their clearness and simplicity. . . . How then did one who had so great a knowledge of the dangers of the sea come to lose his life as he did? The answer is that he was quite insensible to danger, and he ought to have had with him one who could, without presumption, from a like knowledge, have deterred him from incurring the risk he ran, which proved fatal. On former occasions it had been found needful to countermand his orders. Once in 1902, at Watlings, it was necessary to tell him that he must not attempt to board the yacht at night, when the danger was too great, and he was compelled to accept the generous hospitality of the magistrate, who placed his house at his disposal for the night. Again at Grand Bahama, when that fearful storm of January

21, 1903 (a year exactly before the one in which his life was lost), was brewing, he was far too deeply engrossed in his devotions to perceive the danger that threatened us all, or to give the necessary order to put the vessel about and return again to safety.

One further side of the Bishop's character showed itself especially in his episcopate, which perhaps the friends of earlier years were hardly privileged to see, unless they had been brought under his ministrations in confession, or on the sick-bed ; one knew it was there but never expected it to be shown—that was his deep spirituality. To have watched him at his devotions gave no one exactly the idea that he was fervent or spiritual. He was regular as clock-work ; that in itself was worth much. Still the other deeper good was there. During the last few months of his life his sermons and addresses gave evidence that his spiritual life was deepening ; there was a look that spread itself over his face as he prepared to preach, and showed us there was a fire glowing within that breast, with charity for souls whom he addressed. But it was in his one Retreat that this side of his character revealed itself to us who heard it. He had long felt the need of calling his clergy to Retreat, though he himself shrank from conducting it ; nevertheless it was manifestly his duty, so he did it. There he was compelled to show us the real man. . . .

The Bishop would never abandon a work, however small or seemingly unimportant, till he was forced by circumstances to do so. It pained him to see any retrograde movement. He who was ready always to preach to three people, if no more came, yet felt great delight in figures that told of progress. There had been an onward movement in the diocese for years. He reviewed it all, stablished it, settled it, in such a way that we cannot fancy any one, true to the traditions of a diocese like ours, ever wishing to undo, by alteration, the work that he and his predecessors had done. . . .

Before we conclude, our thoughts go back to Ragged Island, and we think of all that struggle in the noisy waters, when the Bishop's spirit was being taken from us, and we were spared the pain of parting. We are glad to think that he, with his pectoral

cross still around his neck, lies in the beautiful blue waters he loved so well. The terrors of death seem to have fled. We think of him only as in perfect health, active, busy, zealous, still at work (is he not ?) for his diocese, with no regrets, with nothing but joy in the remembrance of that happiest period of his lovely life.

CHAPTER X

BISHOP HORNBY

THE cable sent to the diocese by Bishop Edward on receipt of the news of his brother's death consisted of two words, 'Not orphans.' The bereaved clergy had not far to look for another Father-in-God ; there was one, already in episcopal orders, who had a few years previously won the heart of Nassau (as he still wins all hearts), and had himself been won by Nassau's charms. Bishop Hornby's visitation of the diocese in the last year of ' the Lord Edward ' had proved his capability for undertaking a charge of this peculiar nature. Although severe illness had made it necessary for him to resign the See of Nyasaland after a very brief tenure of the episcopate, several years of life in English parochial work had completely restored his health. No controversy attended the election of Dr. Hornby as Bishop of Nassau, and the years during which he ruled the diocese were peaceful and happy ones. Few people could resist the lovable personality of the Bishop ; his keen sense of humour and his overflowing hospitality endeared him to many whose links with religion were of the slightest character ; white folk and coloured folk alike were treated

with the courtesy of the very best type of English gentleman.

My own recollection of Bishop Hornby goes back to the first days of his Nassau episcopate. The Pusey House, Oxford, where I lived for a year after taking my degree, has long been connected with Nassau. There Bishop Edward used to worship when he was staying in Oxford with his sister, Mrs. Inge ; I well remember the tall, spare, white-haired figure who used to kneel at the back of the chapel, with his head buried in his hands, at the early weekday Mass. And the appointment of Dr. Darwell Stone, the present Principal of Pusey House, by Bishop Hornby as his commissary drew the links still closer. It was at Pusey House in those days that I met Bishop Hornby and first heard of the Diocese of Nassau, and fell under the spell of Nassau's attraction.

Bishop Hornby's coming to Nassau was the renewal of a very old and happy association. Weigall, the Bishop's chaplain, had been organist at S. Bartholomew's, Dover, when Dr. Hornby was curate there under Bishop Edward Churton; subsequently when Dr. Hornby was Vicar of S. Columba's, Sunderland, Weigall had had his title and served his first curacy there. With the very thorough knowledge of the diocese which Weigall had gained under the two Bishops Churton it was not difficult for Bishop Hornby to learn the ropes. In the early days, too, there was also his old friend Bishop Edward living at Torquay who was a constant correspondent, and was

always ready with wise and sound advice on any point which the Bishop might submit to him.

Quite at the beginning of his reign Bishop Hornby succeeded in effecting what previous Bishops had longed for and tried in vain to achieve, the persuading of a Community of Sisters to take up work in Nassau.

More than one Community had been approached at different times, finally it was the Community of S. Peter's, Horbury, which consented to undertake the task. The Bishop felt that the special work which they should be asked to do must be educational. Although friends had guaranteed the cost of establishing them in Nassau for one year, their maintenance in the future would be a considerable problem for so poor a diocese. A high school for girls was a great need in Nassau, and it was hoped that through such a school the leaven of Church teaching might spread itself among the 'high majorities' of Nassau society. The fees, though very small, would help to support the Sisters.

Fortunately there was no difficulty about providing a house for them. Some years previously a charming property known as 'The Farm,' belonging to the Hon. E. B. A. Taylor, Colonial Secretary, had come into the market and had been bought by the diocese for what would to-day be considered a ridiculously small sum. It is an old two-storied stone house with a wooden verandah on two sides and several acres of land. It had been occupied by Father Browne and his sister ; but

Miss Browne having returned to England, the upkeep of a house of that size was more than Browne cared to carry on alone. The Farm lies just to the south-east of Government House, on the brow of the hill overlooking S. Agnes', and was an ideal place for a Community House. At one end of the garden is an old studio which the Sisters have converted into a chapel.

The chief work of the Community of S. Peter has generally been penitentiary work : they have never devoted themselves to school work in the way that some communities, e.g. that of S. Mary the Virgin, Wantage, have done. School work has been one of their minor activities, and the number of Sisters possessing teacher's qualifications has not often been a large one. Along with the Sisters at the Farm, to help in the work at S. Hilda's School, there have always been one or two lay school-mistresses. One of the first of these found her vocation to the religious life while teaching at S. Hilda's. To-day she is Superior at the Farm and Head Mistress of the School, and there are few people more widely and deeply loved in Nassau than Sister Constance.

From time to time, when financial difficulties arise, or the supply of teaching Sisters at Horbury is rather short, the suggestion is made that we should try to find another Community to undertake the work. Some people get the impression that the religious results effected by S. Hilda's School are not sufficiently considerable to justify the Sisters' work there. Even if that were really

the case, it would be a mistake to leave out of consideration all the other work that the Sisters do. The presence of the Community at the Farm makes a centre of spiritual force radiating through the whole diocese. Each of the Sisters at the present time is attached to one or other of the Nassau churches for sacristan's and other work. Two of them visit the hospital regularly every week, and one of them visits the women at the prison. Without wishing to underestimate all Bishop Hornby's other work, there was nothing that he did of greater value to the diocese than the bringing to Nassau of the Sisters of S. Peter's, Horbury, and to lose them would be one of the greatest disasters that the diocese could sustain.

Bishop Hornby made a long and sustained effort to invigorate the Cathedral. Although the services were below the standard which he would have wished for in regard to externals, hardly a Sunday passed when he was in Nassau without his taking some part in the Cathedral services, and he made himself completely responsible for the children's service on Sunday afternoons. At the annual meeting of the Synod he caused candles to be placed on the altar and vestments to be worn for the Synod Mass, and it must have wounded him to receive a letter of protest about this from the Christ Church vestry, in view of the concessions made by him to Christ Church susceptibilities.

The standard at S. Mary's, on the other hand, was more than the Bishop cared for, although

that did not interfere with his warm regard for Lowndes. The death of Bishop Henry brought an end to the concessions which Lowndes and others had made in regard to ceremonial, and at S. Mary's the opportunity was taken while the see was vacant to introduce Benediction on Sunday evenings.

A new marriage law was passed for the Bahamas during Dr. Hornby's episcopate ; under this law no clergyman was allowed to perform a marriage unless he was appointed a marriage officer by the Governor or solemnized it in the presence of a marriage officer. The Bishop felt that this was an unwarrantable interference by the State with the functions of priesthood in the administering of the Sacraments. Some of the clergy were in favour of declining to act as Government officers, and of resorting to the second alternative in spite of its inconveniences, but this policy was soon abandoned, although the Bishop himself never became a Government marriage officer. The act, however, is really quite a sensible and reasonable one. Marriage is a civil contract, on which important issues may hang, as well as a Sacrament of the Church. With several different religious denominations, of whose ministers some were completely illiterate, it was necessary for the State to take cognizance of the qualifications of those who were performing marriages, and to lay down certain regulations.

In the Bahamas the Governor still retains the title of ' Ordinary ' ; this has been explained,

now that the Church is disestablished, to involve only the power and duty of granting marriage licences. The civil authorities themselves are not satisfied with the present system of licences. The payment of £1, with a statement made in the presence of a marriage officer, will get a licence through within a few hours. The cheapness and expedition of this mode of getting married has caused it to be much more popular than being married by banns, but there are not sufficient safeguards against irregular or clandestine marriages. Although banns only cost a shilling, the other method is more commonly used ; possibly the superstitions in regard to banns may have something to do with this : one is that it is unlucky to be in church to hear your own banns read ; another is that the party who put the banns up will be the one to rule in the home.

However, the Church's responsibility and guardianship of the Sacrament of Matrimony was asserted and provided for by a resolution passed in the Synod. According to this resolution no marriage may be solemnized in church, except after publication of banns, without a special licence from the Bishop in addition to the licence granted by the Governor. No charge is made for the Bishop's licence, but it gives an opportunity for further inquiries in regard to the status of those seeking to be married.

Inquiries of this sort about possible impediments are really most necessary ; bigamy is far from being uncommon in the Bahamas ; con-

siderable confusion is also created by some strange matrimonial arrangements in the State of Florida; and, since in recent years there has been a very large flow of our population backwards and forwards between Nassau and Florida, these affect the Bahamas very closely. In the interests of morality among the coloured people, the State of Florida, with the characteristic American love of short cuts to perfection, has passed a law whereby a young man, if found living in a house with a woman, may be taken before the marshal and given his choice of compulsory marriage there and then or a term in the penitentiary ! So it is no uncommon thing for a man to have one wife in the Bahamas and another in Florida. Of course these Florida marriages raise very difficult questions : on the one hand can they be said to be real marriages at all ? on the other hand can they be completely disregarded without the issue of a formal decree of nullity ?

Alas ! fidelity to marriage vows, and a sense of marriage obligations, are at present far from characteristic of Bahamians. But, after all, what can you expect from people only a few generations removed from a state in which marriage was only sometimes permitted to them as a special privilege by their masters ? The marvel is that they have advanced so rapidly, and that the institution of the home and the family is taking such firm roots. While in other parts of the West Indies the percentage of illegitimate births is shockingly high, in the Bahamas it seems to be steadily on

the decrease ; at any rate among Church people the proportion of ' legitimate ' to ' illegitimate ' baptisms shows an improvement every year. This is, probably, partly due to increased wages enabling young people to marry earlier.

But although the Church enforces her discipline upon those who have had a fall or, as they sometimes put it euphemistically, ' made a little mistake,' it seems almost impossible to prevent those who are proposing to be married from anticipating marriage rights. It is a shock to find this happening in the case of the steadiest and the most devout of our Church members ; it is almost a rare thing for the first baby not to arrive months before it should ; sometimes a tragedy occurs, as when an intended husband is drowned in a hurricane and a hitherto respected young Churchwoman is left with a burden of shame. Very little stigma, however, attaches to illegitimacy, and the ' outside ' child invariably takes the father's surname. The Church has to go on bearing her witness patiently, and struggling to create a better public opinion on the subject of prenuptial sin by her rules of discipline. But it is hard going against the widespread endorsement of the Bahamian proverb : ' I ain't buyin' no pig in a bag.' For one thing we can at least be thankful, that modern ideas in regard to birth-control, with all their resultant evils, have obtained little foothold as yet in the Bahamas.

While on the subject of marriage legislation it should be mentioned that Bishop Hornby led a

vigorous, though unsuccessful, protest against the action of the State in legalizing marriage with a deceased-wife's sister. But, in view of the fact that only a section of the community owns allegiance to the Catholic Church, it could hardly be expected that, when the civil law of England had been altered, the Bahamas should continue to impose the law of the Church on all and sundry. The Church, however, maintains her stand against such marriages in the case of her own members, but as a matter of fact they occur but seldom.

Bishop Hornby piloted the diocese through the difficult years of the war. In proportion to the size of the population, the contingent sent by the Bahamas on active service was a very good one. One priest of the diocese, Father Horner, Rector of S. Matthew's, went as a chaplain; another priest, Father Langton, Rector of S. Patrick's, Governor's Harbour, went as chaplain to a Bahamian labour contingent sent across to Charleston, Georgia, to help with the building of new docks. The Bishop also lent his yacht, *The Message of Peace*, as a transport for the 1st Bahamas contingent.

During the four years of the war it was impossible for the Bishop to visit England for the purposes for which most Missionary Bishops have to campaign at regular intervals. The drain of the war upon the ranks of the priesthood, and the suspending of the supply of candidates for ordination, was bound to make itself felt upon a small diocese like Nassau, which was chiefly dependent

upon men from England. The financial situation was also extremely difficult, as the cost of living had gone up while funds were running low. The clergy at this time were only receiving a stipend of £150 a year, and the diocese was not in a position to give more than a bonus of £10 a year to meet the increased cost of living.

Nassau, however, was fortunate in the devoted workers at home who kept their end up all the time, and chiefest among them was Miss Elinor Smith of Surbiton, who had been secretary and treasurer of the Nassau Association since the early days of Bishop Edward Churton. Miss Elinor had never been to the Bahamas, but she knew the work of the Church there through and through, and her whole life was devoted to its interests. She and Archdeacon Wakefield were the two pillars on which the whole of the English organization rested for about thirty years ; their deaths within a month of one another in the first year of my episcopate seemed an irreparable blow. Happily I was able to find a successor to Miss Elinor in Miss Muriel Asprey, who is an ideal secretary.

The war brought an end to a most excellent arrangement which Bishop Hornby had made with the vicar of his former parish of S. Columba's, Sunderland. By that arrangement the curates of S. Columba's were, each in turn, to do a spell of two years' service in the Diocese of Nassau. The Rev. W. H. Davison, who was the first, and only one, to come out under this arrange-

ment, did a very fine piece of work in Long Island, and is now Rector of the important church of S. John the Evangelist, Montreal. In more recent years S. Columba's has sent us another splendid priest in the person of the Rev. R. H. Tillard, at present priest-in-charge of Bimini.

As the end of the war drew in sight the Bishop felt that the time was coming when the work of the diocese ought to be handed on to some one else. He had appointed the Rev. Audley Browne to the office of Archdeacon of the diocese, which had been vacant since the consecration of Henry Churton as Bishop, but Father Browne's work in the large and important parish of S. Agnes', together with his chaplaincy at the Nassau Prison, entirely precluded his doing any visitation work in the out-islands. Although still in good health, the Bishop thought that the reins of the diocese ought to be in the hands of a younger man. He had no wish to leave Nassau, the climate suited him, the life there was congenial, he was surrounded with a host of friends, and he had the devotion of all his clergy, but with characteristic self-effacement he decided to resign at Michaelmas, 1918, and with characteristic generosity he gave all the furniture, pictures, books, etc., at Addington House, which he had taken over at a valuation from his predecessor's executors, for the use of his successor.

Bishop Hornby's memory is still loved and revered in Nassau. No Bishop has ever fulfilled the duties of hospitality more thoroughly than he,

and the Saturday afternoon parties at which he instructed the gentlemen of Nassau in the art of playing quoits are still fondly remembered. He is spoken of as the most popular Englishman who ever came to the Bahamas ; in his North Country home upon the Tyne, where he shivers with cold, he still retains his link with the sunny diocese, over which he ruled so well and happily, as Director of the Nassau Association in England.

The clergy of the diocese had decided, on Bishop Hornby's resignation, to nominate the Rev. G. H. Bown, formerly Principal of S. Stephen's House, Oxford, for election by the Synod as their new Bishop. Father Bown was a fine scholar who would well have maintained the traditions of the episcopate in Nassau ; he had also suffered something at the hands of ecclesiastical authorities in England for his uncompromising adherence to Catholic principles and practices. At the time of his election by the Synod he was working, like his predecessor Bishop Venables, in charge of a mission district in the slums of Oxford. But God willed it otherwise, and he was called to higher work in God's kingdom. There was some delay in the confirmation of his election by the Archbishop and Bishops of the Province, he fell ill, and the cablegram announcing that the election had been confirmed only arrived just as he was passing away. May he rest in peace !

At the Synod in which Father Bown was elected a resolution had been passed, at the instance of Father Weigall, by which the appointment, in

the event of Father Bown being unable to accept, should be delegated to Dr. Darwell Stone and Archdeacon Wakefield. Their choice fell upon myself, but there was some doubt as to whether the Archbishop of the West Indies, Dr. Edward Parry, the Bishop of Guiana, would concur. The Canons require the association of the Archbishop of the Province with any person or persons to whom the appointment of a Bishop might be delegated by a Diocesan Synod in the West Indies. The Archbishop did not signify his concurrence, but he submitted my name to the other Bishops for confirmation. This involved the usual long delay. In due course a majority of the Bishops confirmed, and I was consecrated seventh Bishop of Nassau in S. Paul's Cathedral on S. John Baptist's Day, 1919.

I arrived in Nassau on All Saints' Day.

CHAPTER XI

THE PRESENT DAY

THE last seven years have witnessed a very rapid transition in the Bahamas, during which the Church has had a difficult task. When I first came to Nassau the colony was one of the poorest of the British possessions ; the effects of the war were still being felt ; the exchequer was depleted ; trade was at a low ebb ; the hotels were closed, and so there was no large influx of American visitors during the winter months to bring money into the town ; the adverse rate of exchange against the pound sterling (at one time as high as thirty-five per cent.) made the cost of everything purchased in America almost prohibitive. At that time there was only the Ward Line to supply a service between New York and Nassau, and they had been obliged to cut their service down to one passenger boat and one freight boat in every three months. Otherwise communication was dependent upon the small local boats which ran each week (if weather and other conditions permitted) between Nassau and Miami. I made the most uncomfortable voyage of my life on one of these when first I came to Nassau.

At the same time there was a considerable demand for Bahamian labour in Florida, and, with little or no money to be earned at home, there was a steady tide of emigration which depopulated many of the out-island settlements. Government schools were few and badly equipped; the salaries paid to Government officials were meagre, although the cost of living was high. In Nassau the general standard of comfort was on a far simpler scale than to-day, and whereas then there were hardly more than twenty motor cars on the whole island, to-day the number of cars and trucks runs into several hundred. Nassau now boasts good tarred roads and fine public buildings, while private houses are fitted with every modern convenience. The Government, instead of showing an adverse balance in its annual budget, has been able, in addition to spending vast sums of money on public works, to invest a considerable surplus.

This period of hurricane prosperity owes its genesis to the incorporation of the eighteenth Amendment into the Constitution of the United States and the passing of the Volstead Law. Once again Nassau was able to reap the advantages of its geographical position. When the United States went 'dry' (or were supposed to do so !), a resting-place outside American territory had to be found for vast stocks of American liquor : Nassau was only a three days' voyage from New York, and some of the outlying islands and cays of the Bahamas, bordering on the Gulf Stream,

were conveniently accessible from the Southern States. The result was that in the early months of 1920 the port of Nassau found itself crowded with shipping to an extent never before known. Barrels and cases of liquor were piled high along every wharf, even some of the streets were blocked with them ; the Government was hard put to it to build warehouses sufficiently rapidly to meet the Custom House demand ; private residents leased their own cellars to help provide the necessary accommodation ; and an enormous sum accrued to the Government on account of import duties. Sensational pictures appeared in English illustrated papers of Nassau traffic blocked by the rolling of barrels through Bay Street ; grave fears were expressed in England as to the disastrous effects which a flood of liquor into the Bahamas would produce upon the population. But little or none of that liquor was destined for local consumption. Sooner or later it was all intended to find its way back again into the arid territory of the United States.

It is not our business in a book of this kind to discuss the pros and cons of Prohibition ; merely to relate the facts as they bear upon the history of the Bahamas ; and the facts are these. The Prohibition Amendment did not express the will of more than a section of the American people ; it was bitterly resented by almost as large a section, particularly in the Eastern States, and that section made no secret of the fact that they intended to defy the law and evade it by every

means in their power. In England respect for law is such that, however much an Englishman may grumble against a law, public opinion dictates obedience to it until it can be altered. In America things are different ; Prohibition had not got the backing of a solid public opinion, and no stigma rested on those who flouted the law. The natural difficulty of policing a coast-line so long as that of the Eastern States (let alone the Canadian frontier) was increased by the complicated dual system of Federal and State organization. In addition to this, many of the officials entrusted with the duty of enforcement were found to be ready 'to do business.'

These facts combined to produce the 'boot-legging' industry : originally a 'boot-legger' was a gentleman who went about in high boots in which anything from a gun to a bottle of whisky could be securely stowed. The 'boot-leggers' were the people who undertook the smuggling of liquor into the United States and its distribution. It should be clearly understood that practically the whole of this business was in American hands: they might use Bahamian vessels and man them with Bahamian crews, but very few Bahamians actually went into the boot-legging business themselves. Only, as the supply of American bonded liquor in the Government warehouses began to dwindle did the Nassau liquor dealers begin to increase their stocks, and more Nassauvians begin to enter the liquor business : demand created

supply. The attitude of the Bahamas Government was entirely correct ; though they were glad enough to profit by it, they had done nothing whatever to attract the trade to their shores ; when a vessel cleared for some obscure place like St. Pierre their responsibility was at an end ; it was no concern of theirs if the vessel chose to tranship its cargo on the high seas. Again, if a Nassau liquor dealer chose to load up a vessel with liquor and, while anchored off Gun Cay Lighthouse, to 'minister to the needs of passing ships,' that was his own affair. No obligation, either legal or moral, rested on the Bahamas Government to assist America in the enforcement of a law which so large a section of American opinion wished to prevent from enforcement.

The shipping of liquor from Nassau in large quantities began to decrease in 1923, but by that time most of the Nassau liquor dealers had established warehouses, either afloat or ashore, at Grand Bahama, Bimini, and Gun Cay, and some considerable fortunes have been made. The annual revenue reached its highest point in 1923 with £852,573.

This influx of wealth gave the colony its opportunity to develop the tourist traffic. The closing of the large hotels and the reduction of steamship communications have already been noted. An agreement was entered into with the Munson line to provide a fortnightly service with New York throughout the year, and a weekly service during the winter season, as well as a winter service three

times a week between Nassau and Miami, at the cost of a heavy annual subsidy.

Nassau has always been attractive to the American visitor, since Mr. Flagler built the Hotel Colonial, for the sake of its delightful winter climate and its unrivalled opportunities of bathing and fishing; and, since the passing of the eighteenth Amendment, there has been for very many the additional attraction of a less restricted liberty under the British flag. The Hotel Colonial was destroyed by fire at the end of the season of 1921: by a merciful dispensation of Providence there was only the lightest of breezes blowing from the south on the morning on which the fire occurred, so that the flames were blown out to sea instead of gutting the town as might well have happened.

By an arrangement between the Bahamas Government and Mr. Munson a company was formed to build and operate a new hotel on the same site, and since then another large hotel has been built eastward of the city in the neighbourhood of Fort Montagu. West of the city, about three miles out, a large bathing house and golf links have been constructed; so that now, each winter, Nassau becomes the playground of a larger and larger number of American visitors.

More recently the effects of the Florida real estate boom have made themselves felt in the Bahamas: all over New Providence development schemes have been initiated; land has been parcelled out into lots and changed hands at inflated prices; more and more money has been

in circulation. Acres of land which grew nothing but sisal have been cleared ; houses and bungalows are springing up everywhere.

This era of prosperity has not helped the work of the Church. The financial situation has not become easier but more difficult. In spite of the fact that the Government has been able to reduce import duties, the cost of living continues to rise steadily. American visitors set a standard of expenditure which the wealthier Nassauvians are now able to emulate ; servants' wages, for example, have trebled themselves within the last seven years ; this bears hardly on those who are dependent on a small fixed income, and there is probably no class which feels the strain more than the clergy, from the Bishop downwards.

But it is not only the financial strain which renders the work of the Church more difficult ; all classes in Nassau are infected by the dominating interests of wealth and pleasure. Most unfortunately the Nassau 'season' happens to coincide with Lent, and every year it seems harder to get any sustained spiritual effort from our people during a time which they are obliged to look upon as their special weeks of harvest. The advent of the motor car has also tended to keep many people away from church ; it is rather sad to compare the crowded churches in Jamaica with the average attendance at some of our Nassau churches ; and this complaint is not confined to our own Church ; Presbyterians, Methodists, and Baptists all have the same tale to tell. In regard to the coloured

people, at least we may hope that it is a phase through which they are passing, and from which they will emerge, but it is distressing to note that men who in the out-islands had been strong pillars of the Church too often, when they come to Nassau, seem to have left their religion behind them.

Yet it cannot be doubted that the Church has taken the right course in her efforts to help the coloured people to advance in the scale of civilization, despite its risks. As a race, our West Indian coloured people have left the stage of childhood behind and are now in what might be called the stage of adolescence. In races as well as in individuals there is no more difficult stage, none which requires more careful handling. Parents often fail to realize how rapidly their children are growing up, and how much patience and tact are called for in dealing with them. We, as a Church, have to recognize that the methods which were best a few years ago are not the best to-day. A few years ago our people simply wanted to be told what to do and to do it, to-day they claim the right to think for themselves. Yet the growth in their sense of moral and intellectual responsibility is something which we ought to welcome instead of allowing it to cause us annoyance : for it means that the Bahamian Churchmen of the future, if a much less simple, are going to prove a much stronger type, and the material of a native ministry is already at hand.

At the present time the staff of the diocese

contains two native Bahamians, George Pyfrom and Donald Knowles, of whom the former was educated at Dorchester, and the latter took a First in Theology at Durham ; it would be hard to find two better or more capable priests, and their parishes are among the most flourishing in the diocese. We have also established a Diocesan Exhibition at Codrington College, Barbados, which will ensure a succession of theological students being trained there for work in the diocese of their birth ; two of these are, at the present time, just finishing their course and ready for admission to the diaconate. A native ministry was one of the things to which Bishop Edward Churton looked forward most keenly, but, like him, we feel that that is a matter in which we must be content to proceed slowly.

Reference has already been made to the assistance rendered to the diocese by Dr. Bray's Associates. This society and the Christian Faith Society each contribute £200 a year for educational work in the Bahamas. Our policy in regard to education is to supplement what is supplied by the Government, pulling up our stakes and moving to new fields as soon as the Government is ready to assume responsibility. During the last five years the Bray's Associates' grant has enabled us to support two secondary schools for coloured children, one in the eastern district of Nassau for girls and one in the western district for boys. But the Government has now opened a secondary school for boys, and it is felt better

that we, rather than remain in competition with the Government school, should use the energies of our small staff, and our slender resources, in other directions.

The Christian Faith Society's grant has been devoted exclusively to out-island schools. With so many little scattered settlements, in so many different islands, it never has been possible, and never will be possible, for the Government to provide a school for every settlement. In some settlements where there is no school building the Government will, if there is a large enough number of children, give a grant-in-aid to a school privately conducted. But there are still many settlements where there is not even a 'grant-in-aid' school within reasonable distance : these are the districts where our little 'bush-schools,' conducted in the church by the catechist or some Churchwoman, are needed and the 'three Rs' are taught. Sixteen pounds a year (it used to be only ten !) does not seem a princely salary, but the work is done as a labour of love, and even that small honorarium is of some little help to one or two of our catechists, none of whom receive any other remuneration for their church work.

Our large number of unpaid catechists is one of the chief glories of the Church in the Bahamas. One old man, George Hepburn, usually known as 'Pappa George,' for about twenty years conducted two schools on Grand Bahama thirty miles distant from one another. On Monday he would start to walk twenty-two miles from Eight Mile

Rock, the head station, where he kept the Church, to West End ; there he would teach school for the next three days, walk home again, see to his field, and keep Church. The next week he would start off eight miles in the other direction to Smith Point, repeat the same programme; and so on year in and year out. He always carried an axe in his hand when he walked. To-day the old man is as deaf as a post, but he continues to write a most beautiful hand, although some of his abbreviations in the duty book are not always easy to understand. Spelling is not the strong point of many of our catechists : one old man, wishing to describe himself as the officiant in his duty book, regularly wrote himself down as ' fisheating ' minister !

The general attitude both of Baptists and Wesleyans towards the Church is very much more friendly than was the case a few years ago : the only really hostile religious bodies are the American Roman Catholic Mission and the Seventh-Day Adventists. In some of the out-islands Baptist parents, claiming that they themselves are too old to change, are giving their children to the Church, on the ground that the Church will give them better teaching. On such occasions as the visit of the Bishop they will attend the church in large numbers, and thus gradually many of them are becoming familiarized with the Church's worship.

In regard to worship the Diocese of Nassau has probably attained to a larger measure of uniformity

than obtains in most dioceses of the Anglican Communion. I adopted the plan, when first I became Bishop, of discussing everything of this nature in a Sacred Synod of the clergy during the week in which the Diocesan Synod was holding its sessions ; in this way we very soon arrived at something like a common use in the saying or singing of Mass. An action taken by the Provincial Synod of the West Indies in 1922, however, compelled me to discourage the interpolation of the Roman Canon into the English rite, which I had hitherto always done myself and approved. The question before the Synod had been the subject of permissible variations from the Book of Common Prayer. The Bishops, rather than undertake an independent measure of Prayer Book Revision for the Province of the West Indies, decided to authorize an existing rite : accordingly they passed a resolution empowering any Bishop to sanction the use of the whole or parts of the Liturgy of 1549 as an alternative to the rite of 1662. This resolution was re-affirmed at the Provincial Synod of 1926. To-day the only places where this use is not adopted are the Cathedral, on Sunday mornings, and the Turks Islands churches, where, as has already been explained, the traditions are rather different from those in the rest of the diocese.

A few years ago the Cathedral was the centre of a storm which caused a period of sharp and painful religious controversy in Nassau ; references have already been made to this. The

details in dispute were things which might seem small in themselves, but behind them lay the important principle of whether the ordering of divine service was to be in the hands of the Bishop and parish priest or of the lay members of a vestry ; it was not even the case that the vestry represented the opinion of the majority of the communicant members of the congregation. After the settlement, in which the Chief Justice, Sir Sydney Nettleton, mediated, there was no further manifestation of opposition, although, unhappily, the troubles had already done their work in increasing the number of those who had abandoned the habit of Church attendance.

An important development of the last two years has been that of the Scout movement. This movement was initiated in Nassau some years ago by Dr. Joe Albury, who has done more for the young men of the place than any man living, and Miss Evelyn Lobb. When I came to Nassau, Dr. Albury's troop, the 2nd Bahamas, most of whom belonged to Queen's College, the Wesleyan school, was the only one surviving. There were also two companies of Girl Guides, the Greens attached to Queen's College, and the Reds attached to S. Hilda's. Six other troops of Scouts have now been formed—three Church troops attached to S. Matthew's, S. Mary's, and S. Agnes', respectively; two other Wesleyan troops for the southern and eastern districts; and an open troop which is associated with the Roman Catholics but chiefly composed of Baptists.

There can be no doubt that the Scout movement has already done a great deal to smarten up the boys and to inculcate the spirit of discipline and self-respect. But we have to be continually emphasizing the fact that scouting means much more than putting on a uniform and marching behind a band. We are in hopes that the Scout movement is going to have a marked effect upon the general morale of our young coloured people ; its appeal is by no means confined to boys of the Scout age ; many young men who served in the war, and others too, have been eager to join a troop, so that, in forming my last troop at S. Agnes', I found myself having to provide for three patrols of Rovers, as well as a pack of Wolf Cubs.

The young women are some of them rather sore that there is at present no company of Guides for coloured girls ; one of the difficulties in the way of this is caused by the lack of qualified Guiders to undertake such a company ; but a pack of Brownies has been formed for little girls, which is at present under the direction of my sister, and we are hoping that a way may be found in the near future for the formation of another company of Guides.

The absence of suitable grounds has been an obstacle to much development of outdoor games and sports in Nassau ; football is played by both sections of the community, but little cricket is played now except among the coloured people. At the present time there seems to be a growing

keenness on cricket among these latter ; there are half a dozen flourishing cricket clubs in existence, some good players both from Jamaica and Barbados have helped to raise the standard of play, there are challenge cups to be played for, and every available piece of ground is pressed into the service.

We lament the defection of the bulk of the white people from institutional religion, but there is still a strong underlying religious sentiment. This comes out on such occasions as Armistice Day. The service in the Cathedral on Armistice Day was instituted by the present Dean (Dampier-Bennett) in 1921 ; on this occasion the Cathedral is crowded to overflowing. The strength of its appeal was never demonstrated more remarkably than in 1926, when the Government proposed that the Cathedral service should be abandoned for something at the War Memorial. The ex-Service men rose in a body and said that they wanted a religious service and that they needed the atmosphere of the Cathedral to make it what they wanted ; the consequence was that, although the Administrator and the Council (the Governor was absent from the colony) did not attend officially, the congregation at the Cathedral was larger, and the service more impressive, than ever.

Although, as we have indicated, there are ample grounds for dissatisfaction in the results of the Church's work in Nassau, there is no reason for discouragement ; steady and solid work is going

on and producing its fruits : every week, in one parish or another, lapsed members of the Church are coming back ; there is a marked improvement in the number of communions made, in the quality of confessions heard, and in the amount received in collections and church-dues.

In the out-island parishes, too, there seems to be persistent growth ; there is the same improvement in communions, confessions, collections, and church-dues ; there is, as has already been stated, a higher moral standard obtaining wherever the Church has made her influence felt ; there has also been a good deal of building of new churches and enlarging of old ones.

The work of church-building has, however, received a sharp set-back, and at the same time a greatly increased impetus, by the three terrible hurricanes of 1926. Nothing like the severity of those hurricanes had been known for sixty years. The July hurricane swept Acklins, Crooked Island, Long Island, and Exuma ; destroyed S. Anne's on its own patronal festival ; did a vast amount of damage in Nassau ; then went across Northern Andros, and wrecked Bimini, tearing down buildings, sinking vessels, and ruining fields wherever it went. The hurricane of September 15th followed much the same track, completing the tale of damage wrought in July, and including Cat Island in its sweep. Then came a third on October 21st, much narrower in its area, but most disastrous to Abaco, which the first two had left untouched.

The result has been to leave us with no fewer than *thirty churches* either destroyed or seriously damaged, besides rectories and priests' lodges ; and we are faced with the necessity of raising something like £15,000 to make good the losses sustained.

The Government has had its hands full, and its pockets emptied, in the task of rebuilding the houses of the poorer people and providing for the starving and destitute ; so there are no funds available to help the different religious bodies from that quarter. Private individuals have been generous, but their own losses have been very considerable.

Yet the spirit shown everywhere (with the exception of one island, which shall be nameless) has been splendid ; the Church people gather round their broken churches to worship in the ruins ; they have rallied to do as much as ever they can for themselves before coming to the diocese for help ; and, when they have come, their cry has been, ' Give us the lumber and the nails and we will give the labour.' Most disappointing of all was the complete destruction of the new church at Hogans, in the south end of Long Island, which the people had built, under Father Pyfrom's direction, entirely by themselves, and which was just awaiting consecration. Happily the other new church, awaiting consecration, at Pompey Bay, Acklins, stood firm.

The chief difficulty in the working of the out-land parishes during the years of my episcopate

has been our continued shortage of priests. There has never been a time in which I have not had one or other of the parishes under my charge ; yet this has been a means of bringing me into a much closer personal touch with the people and their lives than I could otherwise have achieved, and of giving me an intimate knowledge of the problems and difficulties with which an out-island priest is confronted.

The problems and the difficulties ! Yes, and the joys ! For there is a great deal to fill the life of the island missionary in the Bahamas with joy. If he has a real love of souls, the sunny nature of the people, together with the brightness of the sky and the beauties of the sea, are ample compensation for the loneliness and the poverty and the mosquitoes and other discomforts. A priest of Jesus Christ ought not to be attracted to, or deterred from, a piece of work by considerations of its enjoyability or the contrary. Yet, happy as most of the days of my life have been, I have never known any happier than those which I have spent sailing in the *Livonia* up and down the shores of our Bahama Islands. One day may be much like another. Each station has its crowd of candidates for Confirmation to be collected and given their final instruction ; then there are all their confessions to be heard ; then follows Even-song and the Confirmation Service with an address ; after that one sits for an hour or two hearing the confessions of all the other communicant members of the Church. It may be 10 p.m.

or later before one crawls aboard for dinner. If one has a priest travelling with one, things are easier ; but, single-handed, it is sometimes pretty hard work for the Bishop. Then next morning at sunrise there is a Mass and general Communion. After that there are church-dues to be collected, catechists' accounts to be straightened, local quarrels or disputes or petitions to be dealt with, so that again it is ten or eleven o'clock before one gets aboard for breakfast.

Yet the parting on the seashore, though repeated so often, never fails to pull at my heart strings just as strongly as it did the first time : the group of men and women and children, the newly confirmed still in their white dresses and veils, assembled on the bright sand, with the coco-nut palms in the background, waving their hands and singing, '*God be with you till we meet again.*'

The Nassau diocese forms an ideal sphere for a young priest, brought up in the Catholic tradition, who wishes to do, what every young priest ought to do, three years' service abroad. There are no difficulties of language for him to grapple with, there are no dangers of climate for him to consider. We cannot offer him any attraction in the way of stipend, but we can offer him a roof over his head and enough to live upon in a simple way ; we can offer him plenty of work and a very large measure of love.

We have our ups and downs ; we always shall have. Often the Church feels the strain of carry-

ing on in the face of so many difficulties ; but the work which she has set her hand to she will never turn back from—of helping the coloured people of the West Indies to ‘glorify the Lord in the isles of the sea.’

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